MARGARET
BARKER

the GREAT HIGH PRIEST

The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy

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MARGARET BARKER

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For
Richard Chartres
Bishop of London

No created mind can by any means possess the capacity to understand all, but as soon as it has discovered a small fragment of what it is seeking, it again sees other things that must be sought for; and if in turn it comes to know these, it will again see arising out of them many more things that demand investigation.
Origen, *On First Principles*

Bring us O LORD God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, there to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence but one equal music; no fears nor hopes but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings but one equal eternity; in the habitations of thy glory and dominion world without end.
John Donne 1572–1631

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PREFACE

On 7 February 1999 I was present for the first time at an episcopal Liturgy of the Orthodox Church. It was a revelation.

For many years I had been trying to reconstruct the world of the Jerusalem temple, especially of the first temple, and as I was writing my first book, *The Older Testament* (1987), I began to realize that this was where the roots of Christianity lay. How the older faith had survived was not clear. In the Qumran community was one possibility; another was that it had never really disappeared, and that reconstructions of the second temple period had been inaccurate when they presented the Jerusalem 'establishment' as the norm for both Palestine and the Diaspora. The problem of locating both Philo and the Qumran texts within this picture had been a warning of changes to come. Scholars are now reconstructing a whole variety of 'Judaisms' to try to explain, for example, why *1 Enoch*, found at Qumran, does not quote from the Hebrew Scriptures and has, in its earlier strata, no place for Moses.

It is no longer wise to consider one form of Judaism as 'orthodoxy' and all others as sectarian, it being recognized that there was a huge difference between Rabbinic Judaism and the varieties of the faith in the second temple period. The Sages had not been preserving the older ways but creating a substantially new system after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. Part of their method was defining the canon, but the books excluded from that Hebrew canon were preserved by Christian scribes. We now know that even the text of the Hebrew Scriptures was different before the advent of Christianity. *It is becoming increasingly clear that the Old Testament which should accompany the New Testament is not the one usually included in the Bible.* An exploration of the 'surface' of the Old Testament is no longer enough, nor can 'canonical' texts continue to enjoy a privileged position.

I began to realize that all the major elements of Christianity had been part of the earlier temple tradition: incarnation, atonement, covenant, resurrection and the Messiah. Resurrection, for example, had been the apotheosis known to the ancient high priesthood, as I argued in *The Risen LORD. The Jesus of History as the Christ of Faith* (1996). The Trinitarian faith of the Church had grown from the older Hebrew belief in a pluriform deity, and so the earliest Christian exegetes had not been innovators when they understood the LORD of the Hebrew Scriptures as the Second God, the Son of El Elyon. The One whom they recognized in Jesus had been the LORD, and so they declared 'Jesus is the LORD.' This was the subject of my book *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God* (1992). Monotheism, in the way that it is usually

understood by biblical scholars, had been a consequence of changes made in the seventh century BCE, and was not part of the older faith.

Whilst writing *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (2000) it became clear to me how little of Christian origins could be illuminated by some approaches that are currently fashionable in both Old and New Testament scholarship. Premises are unquestioned, accepted because they were proposed by an influential person, or because they seem to work in other disciplines. We shall never solve the problems by using the methods that created them. Until my experience of the Orthodox Liturgy, I had restricted my own researches to ancient texts. My own confessional background being Bible-based rather than Liturgy-based, it had never occurred to me that Liturgy could be relevant to my quest. My introduction to Liturgy opened up a whole new world, or rather, showed me a world that I already knew very well!

I was invited by the Centre of Advanced Religious and Theological Studies (CARTS) in Cambridge to devise a research project in this area. This I did, and 'The Temple Roots of the Christian Liturgy' was set up. After a few months, however, I withdrew, when I discovered that the extent of my contribution to the project was being misrepresented in favour of someone else. The previously unpublished material in this book is what I had prepared to seed this project: 'The Angel Priesthood', 'The Holy of Holies', 'The Veil as the Boundary', 'Wisdom, the Queen of Heaven', 'Temple and Timaeus' and 'Text and Context'. This is all essentially work in progress, mapping possibilities; there is much more to do, which I had hoped would be the work of the CARTS project. The remainder of the book is articles relevant to Temple and High Priesthood previously published elsewhere, before I discovered the Liturgy. I should like to thank the editors of the *Scottish Journal of Theology* and *The Journal of Higher Criticism* for permission to reprint.

I should also like to thank those who help me: my husband, who understands computers, and all those who have sent me information, pictures, texts and references: Bishop Basil of Sergievo, Carole Bebawi, Kevin Christensen, Alexander Golitzin, Michael Gudgeon, Yuri Klitchenko, Bernhard Lang, Alexei Lidov, David Melling, Robert Murray, Jessica Rose, Eugene Seaich, Justin Taylor, Nicholas Wyatt and Mariamni Yenikeyeff. I should like to dedicate this book to someone whose openness to the Orthodox has done so much to strengthen the bonds between East and West.

Margaret Barker
St Thomas, 2002

ABBREVIATIONS

AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
ANES	*Ancient Near Eastern Studies*
ARCIC	Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford, (1907) 1962
BHS	*Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
CARTS	Centre for Advanced Religious and Theological Studies
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CG	Coptic Gnostic Library
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
Davies	G. I. Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions*, Cambridge, 1991
DJD	*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JHC	*Journal of Higher Criticism*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSQ	*Jewish Studies Quarterly*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KTU	*Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 24, Neukirchen-Uluyn, 1976
L&S	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek and English Lexicon* 9th edn, Oxford, (1940) 1961
MT	*Modern Theology*
Nov. Test.	*Novum Testamentum*
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
RB	*Revue biblique*
SBL	Society for Biblical Literature
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SVT	Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*
T. Neof.	Neofiti Targum
T. Onk.	Targum of Onkelos
T. Ps-Jon.	Pseudo Jonathan Targum
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZTK	*Zeitscrift für Theologie und Kirche*

1

THE SECRET TRADITION[1]

This is the kind of divine enlightenment into which we have been initiated by the hidden tradition of our inspired teachers, a tradition at one with Scripture. We now grasp these things in the best way we can, and as they come to us, wrapped in the sacred veils of that love toward humanity with which Scripture and hierarchical traditions cover the truths of the mind with things derived from the realm of the senses. (Dionysius, *On the Divine Names* 592B)

But see to it that you do not betray the Holy of Holies. Let your respect for the things of the hidden God be shown in knowledge that comes from the intellect and is unseen. Keep these things of God unshared and undefiled by the uninitiated. (Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 372A)

There was far more to the teaching of Jesus than is recorded in the canonical gospels. For several centuries a belief persisted among Christian writers that there had been a secret tradition entrusted to only a few of his followers. Eusebius quotes from a now lost work of Clement of Alexandria, *Hypotyposes:* 'James the Righteous, John and Peter were entrusted by the LORD after his resurrection with the higher knowledge. They imparted it to the other apostles, and the other apostles to the seventy, one of whom was Barnabas' (*History* 2.1). This brief statement offers three important pieces of evidence: the tradition was given to an inner circle of disciples; the tradition was given after the resurrection; and the tradition was a form of higher knowledge, i.e. gnosis. All the arguments in this area are open to the possibility of being circular, and it may well be that the later traditions were built upon the evidence in the gospels for an inner group of disciples, by people who felt that the post-resurrection period was the ideal time for Jesus to be giving revelations about the heavenly world, and they used this as an opportunity to import fashionable Gnostic ideas into Christianity.

Such insertions were the established practice of those who were writing apocalypses at the time.[2] The *Apocalypse of Abraham*, for example, is an expansion of Genesis 15, but at the point where the canonical text describes the LORD speaking to Abraham, the writer of the Apocalypse has inserted a heavenly ascent, a vision of the throne of God and a revelation of the future. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* was probably written after 70 CE, since it describes the destruction of the temple (*Ap. Abr.* 27.3) and, even though a thorough investigation of the text to determine its original language has yet to be made, it seems likely that it was a Hebrew text from the end of the first Christian century. The *Ascension of Isaiah* is similar; a Jewish legend has been expanded in two places by a Christian writer. The first of the visions was the reason

for his being arrested and put to death by the evil king, Manasseh; the second, although forming an appendix to the book, is set in an earlier period of the prophet's life, in the reign of Hezekiah. Again, the original language was probably Hebrew, and the date about the end of the first Christian century. Thus it is not impossible that those who were promoting Gnostic ideas within the Church should have made additions to the established picture of the life of Jesus. Inserting visions into the post-resurrection life of Jesus would have been as acceptable as inserting visions into the story of Abraham or the legend of the death of Isaiah.

The matter, however, is not so simple, because it begins with the assumption that what we call gnosis must have been alien to the teaching of Jesus, and that all traditions of Jesus teaching this gnosis must have been fabrications. Since Daniélou has shown so convincingly that what the second century writers described as gnosis is none other than the essence of Jewish apocalyptic speculation in Hellenistic guise,[3] the assumption that it must have been alien to Jesus can no longer be made with any confidence. Furthermore, many of the Gnostic elements which Daniélou had thought were a pagan modification of apocalyptic can now be seen to have *roots in the theology of the Jerusalem temple*.[4]

The Secret Teaching

There are many passages in the New Testament, both in the Gospels and the Epistles, where the suspicion of a secret tradition is all too apparent. The curious references in the Epistles to the heavenly powers and cosmic struggles, to mysteries, to the transformation of the believer into a more glorious body, and so forth, give good grounds for suspecting that what the later writers described as secret knowledge taught by Jesus may well have been exactly that. Morton Smith suggested that the Pauline letters, read literally, give a far clearer picture of early Christianity than do the Gospels. The discrepancies between the Synoptic picture of Jesus and the apparent beliefs of Paul's churches

> may result from a seepage of secret material into originally exoteric texts ... More of the esoteric teaching is found in the epistles of Paul, the oldest Christian documents, and those most surely written for reading within the closed circles of the churches ... Paul enables us to glimpse the true beliefs of the congregation to which he writes, and he is to be preferred, as a source of early Christian thought, to the later comparatively exoteric gospels.[5]

The alternative, as Hengel said, is to assert that the Epistles record an immediate decline from the original teaching of Jesus into an acutely Hellenized mystery cult.[6]

If a tradition of secret teaching was known to Clement of Alexandria, who flourished at the end of the second century, and if this 'gnosis' is the key to understanding his thought,[7] can it be dismissed as an

insertion into the teachings of the church? As Daniélou also observed, the later Gnostics who presented their (by then heretical) views in the form of the secret teachings of Jesus 'attestent du même coup l'existence de celles-ci'.[8] Clement does not give the impression of having been an innovator; rather, he was concerned with passing on the true traditions of the Church. He knew of people who were making ' a perverse use of the divine words ... they do not enter in as we enter in, through the tradition of the LORD, by drawing aside the curtain' (*Misc.* 7.17), and goes on to show that Church tradition is older than heresy. These teachers, he said, 'preserving the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John and Paul, the son receiving it from the father (but few were like their fathers) came by God's will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds' (*Misc.* 1.1). This 'tradition of blessed doctrine' is described elsewhere as gnosis, 'that which has descended by transmission to a few, having been imparted unwritten by the apostles' (*Misc.* 6.7). It was acquired by 'drawing aside the curtain', *temple imagery for access to the presence of God, the privilege of the high priest.* We should expect it to concern, *inter alia*, the Liturgy.

It is important to note that the secret tradition was not written down. Eusebius implies that Clement did write it down, even though Origen, to whom we shall return, was always reticent about committing it to writing. 'Clement', wrote Eusebius, 'in his work on the Pascha declares that his friends insisted on his transmitting to later generations in writing the oral traditions that had come down to him from the earliest authorities of the church' (*History* 6.13). It is the unwritten nature of this tradition which proves to be the greatest problem in any investigation which relies entirely on written sources, there being nothing else to use. We can proceed only by reading between the lines and arguing from silence, always a dangerous procedure, but less so if the context of the lines and the silence be borne in mind.

For Clement, the Son of God had been manifested both as the LORD in the Old Testament and as Christ the LORD in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Son had been described both as the Spirit which inspired the prophets, and also as Wisdom;[9] and the significance of Clement's teachings about gnosis and the secret tradition cannot be fully appreciated unless this identification be kept in mind. Jesus had been the manifestation of the One whom the Old Testament knew as *yhwh,* the LORD, the Revealer. Further, Clement was heir to the teachings of Philo who had demythologized the ancient traditions of Israel and given them a point of contact with contemporary Greek philosophy. For Philo, the *yhwh* of the Old Testament had been the Second God of Israel, the Mediator, the Revealer, the Word, the Son of the Highest (i.e. of El Elyon). Clement described Jesus as this Second God and thus he could say: 'We define Wisdom to be certain

knowledge, being a sure and irrefragable apprehension of things divine and human, comprehending the past, present and future which the LORD hath taught us, both by his advent and by the prophets' (*Misc.* 6.7). He does not distinguish between the LORD of the Old Testament and the LORD of the New.

If then we assert that Christ himself is Wisdom, and that it was His working that showed itself in the prophets, by which the Gnostic tradition may be learned, as he Himself taught the apostles during his presence; then it follows that the gnosis which is the knowledge and apprehension of things present, future and past which is sure and reliable, as being imparted and revealed by the Son of God, is Wisdom. (*Misc.* 6.7)

Later Clement asks how anyone can be an atheist who has 'learned the divine mysteries from his only begotten Son' (*Misc.* 7.1).

Whilst there can be no doubt that Clement was using the terminology fashionable in his day, it is necessary to look closely at what he says about the secret teachings, the gnosis, in order to identify exactly what this was, and to see if there is any possibility that it could have come from Jesus as he claims. First, it was knowledge of past, present and future *revealed* by the Son of God (*Misc.* 6.7). *Apokaluphtheisa* is the important word, since this immediately places Clement's gnosis in the realm of the visionary experience, apocalyptic, rather than that of pure intellectual inquiry. He implies this elsewhere by the imagery he uses; those who have the truth enter in through the tradition of the LORD by drawing aside the curtain (*Misc.* 7.17). Beyond the curtain in the temple was the heavenly world and the throne of God, and this was the subject of the apocalyptists' visions.[10] Second, the mysteries were concealed in the Old Testament but revealed by the LORD: 'On the one hand, then, are the mysteries which were hid until the time of the apostles, and were delivered by them as they received from the LORD, and, concealed in the Old Testament, were manifested to the saints.' Paul, he said, 'clearly reveals that knowledge belongs not to all ... for there were certainly among the Hebrews some things delivered unwritten ...' (*Misc.* 5.10), in contrast to the more public teaching of the Church. He declares, in other words, that *the roots of the secret tradition were pre-Christian*. Third, he describes the goal of the Gnostic as contemplation, *theoria*, something not available to one who confines himself to philosophy. He needs instruction in the prophecies such that he may receive their revelation and attain the goal of contemplation.

And if, too, the end of the wise man is contemplation, that of those who are still philosophers aims at it, but never attains it, unless by the process of learning it receives the prophetic utterance which has been made known, by which it grasps both the present, the future and the past, ... how they are, were, and shall be. And the gnosis itself is that which has descended by transmission to a few, having been imparted

unwritten by the apostles. Hence, then, knowledge or wisdom ought to be exercised up to the eternal and unchangeable habit of contemplation. (*Misc.* 6.7)

This contemplation, which gives knowledge of things past, present and future, seems to have been Clement's way of describing the goal of the apocalyptists' ascents, namely the vision of God and the knowledge of all things past, present and future that were the result of that experience. 'As the Hebrews [gazed] upon the glory of Moses and the prophets of Israel on the vision of angels, so we also become able to look the splendours of truth in the face.' (*Misc.* 6.15)

This can be illustrated from the two first-century apocalypses mentioned above. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the patriarch is taken up to the Eternal One by Iaoel (*yhwh*-El). Having been granted a vision of the throne, the patriarch is told to look down and see the whole plan of history – past, present and future – unfolding beneath him (*Ap. Abr.* 21–32). The *Ascension of Isaiah* also describes how the prophet was taken up into the seventh heaven by a glorious angel, and then saw the whole mystery of the Incarnation, past, present and future (*Asc. Isa.* chapters 10–11).

The apocalyptists' vision of God did not only give knowledge; it also transformed the mystic into an angelic being, one whose life was that of the other world, even though he might have continued to live for a while on earth as a messenger from God. The Gnostic, too, enjoys a new life, says Clement; he is transformed and becomes divine.

[Gnosis] leads us to the endless and perfect end, teaching us beforehand the future life that we shall lead, according to God and with gods ... Then, having become pure in heart and near to the LORD, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation; and they are called by the appellation of gods, being destined to sit on other thrones with the other gods that have been first put in their places by the Saviour. (*Misc.* 7.10). On this wise it is possible for the Gnostic already to have become God: 'I said ye are gods and sons of the Highest' (*Misc.* 4.23).

This is exactly the transformation experience at the heart of the apocalyptists' tradition. Enoch had ascended to the throne and been transformed into a 'son of man' (*1 En.* 71). The Enochic histories describe how Noah and Moses, depicted as animals, had been transformed into 'men', in Noah's case after he had been *instructed in a secret* by one of the four archangels; Elijah (? the people are not named) had been taken up to heaven (*1 En.* 89.1, 36, 52; cf. *1 En.* 93.4, 5, 8 where Noah, Moses and ?Elijah are the three 'men' in Israel's history). In visionary texts, 'man' is the conventional description of an angelic being: Daniel 9.21 has 'the man Gabriel'; Daniel 10.5 'a man clothed in linen'; and Revelation 21.17 'a man's measure, that is an angel's'. *2 Enoch* described how Enoch was anointed and clothed in the robes of glory: 'And I looked at myself and I had become like one of the glorious

ones ...' (*2 En.* 22.10). *3 Enoch* says that the great angel, Metatron, enthroned in heaven and given the divine Name, had been Enoch in his earthly life (*3 En.* 4; 10; 13). Isaiah was told on his heavenly ascent that he would receive his robe and then be equal to the angels (*Asc. Isa.* 8.14). Philo described how Moses had been transformed into 'God and King' when he ascended Sinai (*Moses* 1.157). It is clearly the same tradition.[11]

The belief that human beings, as a result of their mystical vision, were transformed into angels was neither new nor the teaching of an unrepresentative minority. When Clement's Gnostic hoped for divinity as a result of his 'contemplation' he was only putting into the language of his own day what the ancient religion of Israel had been saying for many centuries, first of its priest kings and then of the various heirs to that tradition. He even spoke of the angelic hierarchies of Israel's older mythology and knew that they were associated with the role of the high priest.

> Gnostic souls, that surpass in the grandeur of contemplation the mode of life of each of the holy ranks ... reckoned holy among the holy ... embracing the divine vision not in mirrors but in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision which is the privilege of intensely loving souls ....Such is the vision attainable by the pure in heart. This the function of the Gnostic, who has been perfected, to have converse with God through the great high priest. (*Misc.* 7.3).

To say that such contemplation of the face of God is an element drawn from 'the vision of the mysteries, a Hellenistic literary touch' or that 'certain elements of [Clement's gnosis] undoubtedly derived from Hellenism, notably those of vision, contemplation and archetypes',[12] is unnecessary and opens up a false gap between this gnosis and anything known to have been associated with Jesus, who had himself said: 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God' (Matt. 5.8). Seeking the face/presence[13] of the LORD had been at the heart of the temple cult (1 Chron. 16.11; 2 Chron. 7.14; Pss. 17.15; 24.6; 27.8–9; 41.12; 105.4, etc.).

The Gnostic believer changes from unbelief to faith, then from faith to knowledge and love, and then 'such an one has already attained the condition of being equal to the angels'. The Gnostic presses on towards his heavenly home 'through the holy septenniad (of heavenly abodes) to the LORD's own mansion' (*Misc.* 7.10). Again, this is exactly the belief of the apocalyptists: those who ascended through the heavens and saw the throne of God were transformed.

Clement knew the temple setting of the apocalyptic tradition; it is no accident that the image of the high priest's entering the holy of holies was used to describe the Gnostic entering the state of knowledge. The high priest's golden plate represented his body, which he left behind when he entered the holy of holies, said Clement's Theodotus. Thus he

passed through the veil which represented the intelligible world and into the world beyond.[14] The possession of knowledge or wisdom had long been the sign of the angelic state; even the serpent in Eden knew as much when he said to Eve that she would become like the gods knowing good and evil. It is hostility to this Wisdom tradition which underlies much of the transmission and editing of what we now read as the canonical Old Testament. That 'gnosis' existed and had an honourable place in the beliefs of some (most?) of the heirs of Israel's ancient religious tradition should come as no surprise, nor should the hostility to it that emerged very early in the history of the Church.

If Clement knew the temple tradition, then he will also have known that the Jerusalem temple was a 'copy', and that everything in it represented some aspect of the heavenly world. Buildings, furnishings and temple servants were all copies of heavenly originals; Moses had been told to make a tabernacle in accordance with the pattern he had been shown on the mountain (Exod. 25.9, 40), and David gave to Solomon a plan of the temple he had to build, every detail of which had been given to him by the LORD (1 Chron. 28.11–19). 'On earth as it is in heaven' became one of the principal elements of the apocalyptists' temple-rooted traditions, and thus Clement was able to show how the degrees of glory in heaven corresponded to the ranks within the Church (*Misc.* 6.13). This feature in Clement's thought is not a sign that he had drawn Platonic archetypes into his gnosis. He may have used terminology drawn from that philosophy, as did Philo, but the heavenly world had long been known in the temple as the plan which determined everything below. This view is known to have survived at Qumran; it is presupposed in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Blessings. Thus again it is unwise to open up unnecessary gaps between the gnosis of Clement and anything that could conceivably have come from Jesus. When Clement declared he had a secret tradition from Jesus, he could have been telling the truth.

Clement knew many of the texts we now call apocalypses. He mentioned *1 Enoch* several times in connection with the fallen angels (*Inst.* 3.2; *Misc.* 1.17; 5.1), the *Assumption of Moses* (*Misc.* 6.15), and, significantly, the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, a work which is otherwise unknown to us. He quotes a passage from this text describing a heavenly ascent to see the angels ('Lords') sitting on their thrones in the sanctuary of salvation, praising God Most High.[15] It may well be that those elements of his gnosis, which we still cannot place with certainty within the apocalyptists' scheme as we have reconstructed it from material available to us, may be elements which came from texts and traditions no longer known to us.

Clement also knew two gospels which presumably were used by the Alexandrian Christian community, the so-called *Gospel of the Egyptians* and the *Gospel of the Hebrews* (*Misc.* 3.45, 63, 64, 66, 68, 91, 97; *Excerpts*

67 and *Misc.* 2.9; 5.14 respectively). Of the former, little is known for certain beyond the quotations in Clement, which deal largely with the questions of marriage and bearing children. There is, however, one quotation from it in Epiphanius (fourth century), which says that the *Gospel of the Egyptians* was a book 'in which many strange things were handed down as having come secretly from the Saviour, such as that he revealed to the disciples that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one and the same person' (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 1.62). Of the *Gospel of the Hebrews* more is known; it is usually described as having syncretistic-gnostic elements on the basis of its having material not found in the Synoptic Gospels, but found in Gnostic texts.[16]

There is a possibility that there has been here, too, a tendency to prejudge issues as to what could and could not have been 'original' to Christianity. The Holy Spirit is described in this Gospel as Jesus' mother who came to him at his baptism and said that she had been waiting for him, her first born, who would reign for ever. In him she had at last found her 'rest'. There had been a division of opinion as to where Wisdom had found this 'rest' in the past; Ben Sira had described how Wisdom, after her long search, found her rest in Israel (*Ben Sira* 24.7), but the tradition of the apocalyptists was very different. They said that Wisdom had found no place in Israel and had taken her place again among the angels (*1 En.* 42). The tradition of Wisdom's exile was perpetuated in the Gnostic writings, and a Gospel that declared that Wisdom had finally found her rest in Jesus would have been the link between the ancient traditions of Israel and the later Gnostic writings.[17] In the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, Jesus described how his mother lifted him up by the hair and carried him to Mount Tabor. To those who read only the Synoptic Gospels, these seem fantastic statements; but the belief that the Holy Spirit was both feminine, and, as Wisdom, the mother of the Messiah, was both ancient and widely attested.[18] She appears throughout Gnostic literature as Sophia, and the setting of these texts places both her and the tradition firmly within that of ancient Israel. Further, one only has to read Ezekiel's account of his heavenly journey to Jerusalem to see that the Spirit was described there, too, as having carried the prophet by his hair (Ezek. 8.3). It was doubtless the conventional way for such an experience of rapture to be described, but the very fact that it was conventional should warn against assuming that such descriptions could not have been part of the original tradition about Jesus. The real question raised by such material is not: Where did it come from and why? but: Why did it disappear from the public form of the tradition? Clement, who knew a secret tradition at the end of the second century CE, knew all this material and used it freely.

It was fashionable for a long time to dismiss as ridiculous anything which does not conform to the modern Church's idea of what the original Christianity must have been. Hanson has an excellent survey of

the state of things forty years ago, before the Nag Hammadi finds made their impact on scholarly certainties. Clement's secret tradition had been dismissed as an 'ecclesiastical Christianity, mystically coloured'. Scholars made no secret of their 'entire disbelief in the authenticity of this secret tradition' and denied any authority to Clement's conception of a secret tradition. Hanson himself regarded Clement's claim as 'entirely untrustworthy' on various grounds: first, it consisted of theological speculations with a 'suspiciously Alexandrine ring to them'; second, Clement seems to have been following in the footsteps of Philo; and third, he had been influenced by the allegorical exegesis found in the Letter of Barnabas[19] to such a degree that that 'he persuaded himself that this supposed secret teaching of Barnabas had been maintained independently of the New Testament up to his own day'. These three reasons are a good illustration of how an issue can be decided by the premises one brings to the argument. Hanson concluded: 'Clement's teaching did, as far as we can reconstruct it, consist of speculations, intuitions and inspired (or not so inspired) theologising, which had no connection with any oral teaching given by our LORD or his apostles.'[20]

Much of Clement's secret tradition was widely known among the earliest Christian writers. Or, to put it another way, there appeared very early in Christian writings, references to beliefs that are nowhere recorded in the New Testament and yet clearly originated in the tradition we call apocalyptic. *As more is discovered about this tradition, so more and more points of contact can be found between the beliefs of the ancient temple theology and what became Christianity.*[21] The secret tradition of the priests probably became the secret tradition of early Christianity; the visions and angel lore suggest this, as does the prohibition in Deuteronomy 29.29. What had the secret things been that were contrasted with the Law? What had been meant by saying that the Law was neither too hard nor too distant? The comparison suggests that there had been something both hard and distant which had been brought from heaven by one who had ascended (Deut. 30.11–12, cf. John 3.11–12). This suggests that a secret tradition had been banned by the Deuteronomists, who were the temple reformers at the end of the seventh century BCE, and we do not have to look far to discover what this tradition must have been. They offered their Law as a substitute for Wisdom (Deut. 4.6, cf. Gen. 3.5, the Wisdom that made humans like gods). They also said that the LORD was not visible in human form (Deut. 4.12), even though a contemporary priest, Ezekiel, had had a vision of a human figure on the throne (Ezek. 1.26–28), and Isaiah had seen the LORD (Isa. 6.5) and someone, of sufficient repute to have his words included in Scripture, had described the vision of God on Sinai (Exod. 24.10).

On whose authority did Christianity suddenly adopt all these apparently strange views? Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, writing at the

beginning of the second century, described the Incarnation as the advent of a great star before whom all magic and evil crumbled away (Ignatius, *Ephesians* 19). He claimed to know 'celestial secrets and angelic hierarchies and the dispositions of the heavenly powers and much else both seen and unseen' (*Trallians* 5). How did he know this and from whom? He was, after all, the bishop who constantly emphasized the need for churches to act only in accord with their bishops and to shun 'the teachings and time worn fables of another people' (*Magnesians* 8). 'To Jesus alone as our high priest', he wrote, 'were the secret things of God committed' (*Philadelphians* 9). Why was it to Jesus as the high priest that these things had been committed? *Presumably because it was a temple tradition.* The anonymous *Letter to Diognetus* knew that the way to life was through knowledge, and that Adam and Eve were condemned not for having knowledge, but for misusing it. 'Without knowledge there can be no life, and without life there can be no trustworthy knowledge' (*Diognetus* 12). Irenaeus, at the end of the second century, wrote his *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching.* He described it as a manual of essential teaching (*Dem.* 1), since he was conscious of the threat of heresy and the need 'to hold the rule of faith without deviation' (*Dem.* 3). The first major topic on his list of essentials was a description of the seven heavens, the powers and the archangels in them, the relationship of the cherubim and seraphim to the Word and Wisdom of God, and the role of the sevenfold Spirit. He knew that the symbolism of the temple had enshrined this teaching in the seven-branched lamp, which had represented the seven heavens. *This material based on temple symbolism was, for Irenaeus, the first essential of the apostolic preaching,* but where is it found in the New Testament? There are allusions to such things in the Epistles and in the Book of Revelation, but nowhere are they spelled out. It may be significant that rabbinic writings are curiously reticent about temple symbolism.[22]

Temple symbolism, the great high priest and a secret tradition were especially associated with liturgical customs, for which there was no obvious authority in the New Testament. Writing in the first half of the third century, and therefore long before developments in the time of Constantine had put great emphasis on temple tradition, Origen compared certain Christian practices – praying towards the east, baptismal rites, and the certain customs in the Eucharist – to secrets of the temple 'within the veil',[23] which had been guarded by the priests. Explaining the role of the family of Kohath, who carried the tabernacle through the desert (Num. 4), Origen emphasized that they were not permitted to see what they were carrying. The high priest Aaron and his sons had to wrap all the sacred furnishings of the tabernacle and thus veil them before entrusting them to others. The mysteries of the Church were similar: 'handed down and entrusted to us by the high priest and his sons'.[24] Origen does not name the high priest, and so we assume it was

Jesus, but it is possible that there had been a continuity with the temple priesthood. Many priests had joined the young Church (Acts 6.7). Origen's theme of the temple secrets becoming those of the Church was taken up by Basil of Caesarea in his treatise *On the Holy Spirit*. There were, he said, certain practices 'handed down to us in a mystery (*en mysterio*) from the tradition of the apostles'. He mentions first signing with a cross, facing east to pray, and the words of *epiklesis*.[25] The tradition 'kept in silence and in secret' concerned 'liturgical customs, prayers and rites of the sacraments and other Christian universal customs ... [and] the theological doctrines implied in the liturgical rites and prayers ...'.[26]

If the secret tradition did concern the practice and meaning of the sacraments, and if this tradition was rooted in the symbolism of the temple and the teachings of the ancient priesthood, its recovery is of more than simply academic interest. It has been all too easy for *sola scriptura* scholars to dismiss such a claim, and then find themselves constructing theological positions which are not even biblical, because they have ignored the environing traditions which could have illuminated the meaning of the biblical texts. An extreme example would be R. P. C. Hanson's assessment of Basil: 'Behind this unfortunate and totally unjustifiable claim for a genuine apostolic origin for liturgical and customary practice of the contemporary Church, lies an uncertainty about how to use biblical material.'(!)[27]

Origen knew a great deal about secret tradition, but for him it was not, apparently, an oral tradition. He claimed that the Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament, was the source of the *aporreta*, the forbidden, secret or ineffable teaching. There can be little doubt that what he described in this way was the tradition which, in another context and at another period, we should have called apocalyptic, so much of which has a temple setting and concerns the secrets of the holy of holies, 'revealed' to the seer. 'Origen has discerned quite clearly' wrote Daniélou, 'which elements in the Old and New Testaments are apocalyptic in character; and their very presence authorises him as he sees it, to conclude that Scripture itself contains teachings reserved for the select few.'[28] The prophets and the apostles had been enlightened through the Word to understand the unspeakable mysteries: 'And in the first place we must point out that the aim of the Spirit ... was pre-eminently concerned with the unspeakable mysteries concerned with the affairs of men ...' (*First Principles* 4.2.7). These dealt with the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the origin of evil; and Scripture concealed this teaching 'in words forming a narrative that contained a record dealing with the visible creation' (*First Principles* 4.2.8). To seek such hidden meanings in historical narrative would have been the next logical step from the position of the apocalyptists who saw in everything the correspondence of earth and heaven; if in temple symbolism, why not in historical events also?

Origen's use of *1 Enoch* (a deposit of priestly material), whether by quotation or allusion, is a clear testimony to knowledge of this tradition (*First Principles* 1.3.3; 4.4.8; *On Numbers* Homily 28.2), although he recognized that it was not regarded as Scripture (*Celsus* 5.54; *On Numbers* Homily 28.2). He was emphatic that mysteries of the apocalypses concerning the heavenly gates for the soul were rooted in Scripture, and owed nothing to influences from Persia and the Mithras cult as Celsus had maintained. 'Let him peruse', he wrote, 'at the end of Ezekiel's prophecies, the vision beheld by the prophet, in which gates of different kinds are enumerated ... and let him peruse also from the Apocalypse of John, what is related of the city of God and its foundations and its gates' (*Celsus* 6.23). The extent of his understanding of the apocalyptic tradition can be seen in his speculations about the angelic state. Whilst discussing the Sadducees' question in Matthew 22.23 (*On Matthew* 17.30), he wonders whether some people can become angels before the general resurrection. This was the belief of the apocalyptists.

Origen saw the secret teaching of Jesus as part of this apocalyptic tradition rooted in the Old Testament.

> Our prophets did know of greater things than any in the Scriptures, which they did not commit to writing. Ezekiel, for example, received a roll written within and without ... but at the command of the Logos he swallowed the book in order that its contents might not be written and so made known to unworthy persons. John also is recorded to have seen and done a similar thing (Rev. 10.9). Nay Paul even heard 'unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter'. And it is related of Jesus who was greater than all these, that he conversed with his disciples in private, and especially in their secret retreats, concerning the gospel of God; but the words which he uttered have not been preserved because it appeared to the evangelists that they could not be adequately conveyed to the multitude in writing or speech. (*Celsus* 6.6)

Jesus 'who both beheld these weighty secrets and made them known to a few' (*Celsus* 3.37), had had knowledge of angels and demons. This emphasis on Jesus having had a secret teaching which he passed on to only a few of his disciples appears time and again in Origen's writings. In the *Preface* to *First Principles* we read:

> The following fact should be understood. The holy apostles, when preaching the faith of Christ, took certain doctrines, namely those which they believed to be necessary ones, and delivered them in the plainest terms to all believers, even to such as appeared to be somewhat dull in the investigation of divine knowledge ... there were other doctrines, however, about which the apostles simply said that things were so, keeping silence as to how or why ... (*Preface* 3)

Origen wrote of 'the doctrines which were spoken in private by Jesus to his genuine disciples' (*Celsus* 3.60), and said something similar of John the Baptist, who had given his special teaching on prayer to his close disciples only, and not to everyone he baptized (*On Prayer* 2.5).

Paul also knew secret things. Discussing his teaching about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, Origen wrote: 'The apostle wished to conceal the secret meaning of the passage which was not adapted to the simpler class of believers ... then, knowing that there was secret and mystical meaning in the passage ... he subjoins the following, "Behold I show you a mystery"; which is his usual style in introducing matters of a profound and more mystical nature and such as are fittingly concealed from the multitude ...' (*Celsus* 5.18).

Most significant of all, Origen says that Jesus gave the secret teaching to his disciples after the resurrection. Explaining 'I have yet many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now' (John 16.12), he says that Jesus found it impossible to take his disciples beyond the surface meaning of the Jewish law and 'postponed such a task to a future season, to that namely which followed his passion and resurrection' (*Celsus* 2.2). Thus Peter was enabled by the Spirit of truth to see beyond the Jewish food laws when he had his vision at Joppa (Acts 10.9–16). 'And so, after that vision, the Spirit of truth which conducted Peter into all truth, told him many things which he was unable to bear when Jesus was still with him in the flesh' (*Celsus* 2.2).

There are hints of this in the Gospels, for example after the Transfiguration: 'They kept silence and told no one in those days of what they had seen' (Luke 9.36). But had the Transfiguration originally been a resurrection appearance? Was something revealed to the inner circle of the disciples after the 'exaltation' of Jesus? The Fourth Gospel emphasizes the exaltation of Jesus and links it firmly to the crucifixion (John 3.14; 8.28; 12.32–4), but the earlier tradition of exaltation had been a mystical ascent such as that of Moses when he was made 'God and King' (Philo, *Moses* 1.155–58). The similar tradition in *1 Enoch*, where he is transformed by the heavenly vision, and then declared to be Son of Man cannot be dated (or even read) with any certainty, but it is closer to the priestly style of writings than is Philo (*1 En.* 71.14).[29] The pattern in the much later *3 Enoch* is quite clear; Enoch had been exalted and transformed into the Lesser *yhwh*. The older tradition of exaltation must have originated in temple theology where the one who was raised up saw the throne in heaven and became *yhwh* the Son of God Most High.[30] With his divinity came the gift of Wisdom. There is an echo of this in Philippians 2.9, where Jesus is exalted and given the great Name, i.e. *yhwh*. Romans 1.4 is similar: Jesus is designated Son of God after the resurrection. It would appear that the transformation into a Son of God by means of the mystical ascent and enlightenment became associated in Christian thought with the exaltation after the crucifixion. Presumably there had been a similar tradition of enlightenment in the post-resurrection period.

It is possible, however, that the exaltation and enlightenment had been part of Jesus' own experience as a mystic, and not simply the

Church's post-Easter interpretation of the crucifixion. There are many examples which point to this, especially in the Fourth Gospel: being born from above, entering and seeing the kingdom of God (John 3.3, 5), the descent of the Son of Man (3.13), the one who comes from above and tells what he has seen (3.31–2), the claim that Jesus was not of this world (8.23). We have no proof that the Johannine Jesus was not drawn from life. 'For John,' wrote Morton Smith, 'Jesus is the incarnation of the pre-existent Logos. But this does not prevent John from preserving and reworking material that has come to him from an earlier and more historical tradition, and to such material we owe the recollection that Jesus in his lifetime claimed to have gone up to heaven and to speak of it from first hand knowledge.'[31] Similarly, the Synoptic Gospels describe a Jesus who saw the heavens open (Mark 1.10), who spoke with Satan and saw all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and was taken (how?) to a pinnacle of the temple (Luke 4.1–13), who saw Satan fall from heaven (when? where? Luke 10.18).

Origen distinguished between the hidden and the ineffable knowledge. Of some matters he could say: 'these are hidden'; but of others he said: 'If anyone is worthy to know the ineffable things, he will learn the Wisdom hidden in the mystery which God established before the ages' (*Commentary on Matthew* 17.2). This Wisdom concerned the heavenly powers of which Paul wrote in Colossians. According to Origen: 'The Jews used to tell of many things in accordance with secret traditions reserved to a few, for they had other knowledge than that which was common and made public' (*Commentary on John* 19.92). Daniélou concluded that Origen's ineffable mysteries were a continuation of the Jewish mysteries and dealt with the same matters. He suggested that some of this knowledge might have been the names of the angels, which were part of the secret teachings of the Essenes.[32]

A clear and significant pattern emerges from even so brief a survey as this. Origen and Clement both believed that Jesus had given secret teachings to certain disciples both when he withdrew with them from his public ministry, and also after the resurrection. Hints in the Gospels suggest that Jesus himself had had mystical experiences associated with the secret knowledge. This teaching dealt with heavenly mysteries and was the tradition of the apocalyptists. There are, of course, hints of this in the synoptic apocalypses, but had that been the full extent of the teaching, there would have been nothing to call hidden. We are reduced to the dangerous business of speculation, as to what that teaching might have been, and what happened to it.

The Post-Resurrection Teaching

The second characteristic of the secret tradition which Clement describes and Eusebius quotes (*History* 2.1), is that it was passed to the disciples

after the resurrection. Many early Christian texts have the form of a revelation given by the risen Jesus to certain disciples, and the sheer number of them must raise questions; why was this particular form adopted? and how did it relate to the secret tradition? Most of the texts have been labelled (one might almost say dismissed) as Gnostic, and it is obvious why this form of revelation discourse would have appealed to Gnostic writers. On the other hand, they must have had good reason for presenting their characteristic teachings as a post-resurrection discourse, rather than, for example, as a variant of the Sermon on the Mount. As Daniélou observed, the fact that the heretics wrote in this way indicated that they were imitating a recognized Christian form.[33] The form was very different from anything in the Synoptic Gospels although it had some affinities with the Fourth Gospel. The content, though, was not entirely alien, as even the Synoptic Gospels record that the secrets of the kingdom had been revealed to only a few during the Galilean ministry (Mark. 4.11 and parallels). *Might it be, then, that post-resurrection did not necessarily mean post-Easter? Might it mean the teaching given by Jesus after he had been raised up as the great high priest?*

The experience of 'death' is common to many mystery traditions, the condition of transition to another mode of being. 'The true knowledge', wrote Eliade, 'that which is conveyed by the myths and symbols, is accessible only in the course of, or following upon, the process of spiritual regeneration realised by initiatory death and resurrection ... If one knows death already here below ... then one is living, we may say, a beginning of immortality or growing more and more into immortality.'[34] His material was drawn from the mystery and shamanic traditions of many cultures. Chernus has shown that a similar pattern can be detected in third-century CE Jewish midrashim: 'the direct vision of God, conceived in an esoteric context, the fire phenomenon related to revelation, the need to accept death as a means for special access to the knowledge of the Torah, and the dew as the agent of the resurrection'.[35] The tradition by this period was associated with the revelation at Sinai,[36] but Merkavah texts also warn of the danger of attempting to experience the vision of the throne. Of the four rabbis (Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Aher and Akiba) who attempted to enter the garden (i.e. Paradise), only Akiba entered in peace and came out in peace (*b. Hagigah* 14b). Those who successfully experienced the vision were transformed by it and began a new existence as an angelic being. There is the cryptic account in *1 Enoch* 71 which cannot be dated, but a very early account of this experience is embedded in Isaiah 33:

> Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire
> Who can dwell with the burnings of eternity? ...
> Your eyes will see the king in his beauty,
> They will see a land that stretches far. (Isa. 33.14,17)

It is possible that this is what was meant by the post-resurrection experience of Jesus. I shall return to this.

The usual picture of Jesus is very different, drawn from an amalgam of the Synoptic Gospels. Few of us were raised on the revelation discourses of the Fourth Gospel and, as a result, these discourses are perceived as something of a problem. Those who have wanted to abandon the traditional picture of Jesus the Galilean miracle worker have usually opted for something more ordinary: the carpenter from Nazareth who was a good itinerant preacher although perhaps somewhat misguided at times, or the cynic sage whose reputation was much enhanced by Jewish marketing men. His over-enthusiastic followers saw in him far more than he had ever intended, we have been told, and attributed to him all sorts of miraculous acts including rising from the dead. To abandon the Synoptic Jesus for someone even stranger, on the other hand, is something not to be undertaken lightly, and yet this is now the possibility being offered as a result of studying early texts which deal with the person and teaching of Jesus.

Recent scholarship has suggested that the Synoptic Gospels' pictures of Jesus, far from being accurate, are in themselves specially constructed to present a certain point of view, and that their hold over our minds, their 'tyranny', has prevented unbiased access to extra-canonical sources. In other words, when the Synoptic evangelists selected material for their portraits of Jesus, each evangelist chose, so far as can be determined, from among undifferentiated traditions about Jesus in the context of a given confession, i.e. in accord with a given cover story of faith; that is to say, in accordance with the given community image of Jesus.[37]

The last fifty years or so have seen a great increase in the amount of ancient Christian material from which to reconstruct the original 'picture' of Jesus. Papyrus Egerton 2[38] (a fragment of otherwise unknown material about Jesus), the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Apocryphon of James* and the *Dialogue of the Saviour*[39] are all thought to derive from early Christian oral tradition, just as did the Synoptic Gospels, but the picture the non-canonical texts give is very different, making Jesus more akin to a Merkavah mystic than to a simple teacher.

What, then, should be the criteria for reconstructing the original Jesus? Hedrick, for example, suggested that the lack of an apocalyptic Son of Man Christology in the *Gospel of Thomas* casts doubt on the value of that aspect of the Synoptic picture. If the *Gospel of Thomas* is authentic, then 'apocalyptic' should not be the primary context for understanding the original Jesus. And if this is correct, then the 'secret' teaching, which so strongly resembles that of the apocalypses, can easily be shown to be a later addition. A line of reasoning is thus established and then substantiated by a complementary tendency to present Jesus more as a wise man than as an apocalyptic prophet.

It is all a matter of definition. Can we, for example, any longer regard 'wisdom' and 'apocalyptic' as separate categories and thus replace the apocalyptic prophet with the wise man?[40] Is it wise to take one feature of the Synoptic Gospels such as a Son of Man Christology and say because this is absent from, for example, the *Gospel of Thomas*, there are grounds for doubting the importance of the apocalyptic world view for understanding Jesus? The world view, which, for the sake of giving it a name, we call 'the apocalyptic world view' was not confined to unrepresentative or sectarian groups in Palestine. It was the way a large number of people viewed the world. *Apocalyptic was the world view of the Jerusalem temple cult and of all who had any association with it*; it will have been the norm for most of the heirs to Israel's ancient religion: Jews, Samaritans, Gnostics, or whatever. Even the most cursory reading of the *Gospel of Thomas* shows that it originated in an apocalyptic milieu, despite there being no Son of Man Christology. It claimed to be 'secret sayings' whose correct interpretation would lead to triumph over death. The disciples were told 'Nothing which is hidden will not become manifest' (*Thomas* 5); 'Nothing covered will remain without being uncovered' (*Thomas* 6); 'Jesus said "I have come to cast upon the earth fire, sword and war" ' (*Thomas* 16); 'When you make the above like the below then you will enter [the kingdom]' (*Thomas* 22); 'When will the new world come? What you look forward to has already come but you do not recognise it' (*Thomas* 51); 'Jesus said "When you make the two one you will become the sons of men" ' (*Thomas* 106); 'The Kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and men do not see it' (*Thomas* 113). One can only say that this is not 'apocalyptic' if one has not realized the temple matrix of 'apocalyptic' with all that this implies in terms of theology and world view.

There are similar questions about the meaning of 'gnostic' and how gnosis relates to *Thomas* and the whole revelation genre. J. M. Robinson states that the definition of gnosis adopted by the Messina Colloquium has added to the problem in that the definitions were based on the Gnosticism known from second-century sects.[41] What, he asked, of those of the first century? He attempted to work 'not back from second-century gnosticism, where one is sure to be talking about gnosticism, but rather forward from Jesus' immediate followers (for whom the same cannot surely be said), in search of a hypothetical sociological roadbed for a trajectory from Jesus to Gnosticism'. Rigid definitions hindered rather than helped. He quoted H.-M. Schenke: 'I am of the opinion that clarity of concepts can, under certain conditions, also obscure the issue at stake ...'[42] The proposed definition of Gnosticism was a retrograde step in so far as it retained the implication that Gnosticism was a Christian heresy. Any text such as the *Gospel of Thomas* was automatically marginalized in any reconstruction of Christian origins.

The problem of early Christian post-resurrection revelation discourses is thus beset with presuppositions: there is the 'tyranny' of the Synoptic Jesus; there is the persistent belief (hope?) that Gnosticism was a heresy; and there is the false distinction between Wisdom and Apocalyptic and an unsatisfactory definition of both. Without these presuppositions the whole picture alters; the *Gospel of Thomas* may embody an ancient tradition quite independent of the Synoptic Gospels; what was later recognized and defined as Gnosticism may have been present in the earliest Christian teaching because it originated in pre-exilic traditions of Israel in the temple cult.[43] In other words, 'Gnostic' ideas could have been part of the teaching of Jesus, his 'wisdom' could have been one aspect of temple traditions. Such a sweeping away of certainties brings us face to face with the most difficult question of all: might Jesus have seen himself as the revealer of heavenly secrets to the chosen few? The Jesus of the post-resurrection revelations is so different from the Synoptic Jesus that we feel it must be a distortion by heretics who had their own ulterior motives. But, as Hedrick observed, had history left us only Q, John and *Thomas*, our picture of Jesus would have been very different.[44] If we take the Jesus material as a whole, together with the Palestinian culture in which it was rooted, the visionary tradition of these post-resurrection texts assumes a greater importance, not least because the goal of the visionaries was the heavenly throne which transformed the beholder into an angel, a Son of God.

Who distorted the tradition? Recent work on the transmission of the New Testament has shown convincingly that what is currently regarded as 'orthodoxy' was constructed and imposed on the text of the New Testament by later scribes 'clarifying' difficult points and resolving theological problems.[45] Some of the difficulties removed by their efforts were texts which supported a Gnostic point of view, or suggested an adoptionist Christology. *Both 'Gnostic' and 'Adoptionist' ideas (or an earlier form of them) would have been part of the temple theology and therefore of any 'secret' tradition derived from it.* It may be that those traditions which have been so confidently marginalized as alien to early Christianity, on the basis of the present New Testament text, were those very traditions which later authorities and scribes had set out to remove.

Eight early texts which show Jesus as the revealer of hidden things passed on to an inner circle, are grouped together in Schneemelcher's revised edition of Hennecke's *New Testament Apocrypha*[46] under the heading 'Dialogues of the Redeemer'. It is not easy to date any of them, but the *Apocryphon of James*, the *Dialogue of the Saviour* and the *Epistle of the Apostles* are thought to be the earliest. The *Apocryphon of James* is usually dated in the early or middle second century, and it is in the form of a letter sent by James the Righteous to someone whose name cannot

be deciphered, but who has enquired about the secret teaching. 'You asked me to send you the secret teaching which was revealed to me and Peter by the LORD ... Be careful and take heed not to rehearse to many this writing which the Saviour did not wish to divulge even to all of us, his twelve disciples ...' The letter goes on to describe the occasion on which the secret teaching was given. The disciples were all together, 'recalling what the Saviour had said to each of them whether in secret or openly ... and lo the Saviour appeared ... 550 days[47] after his resurrection from the dead'. Peter and James were then drawn aside for special instruction. When the teaching had finished, the LORD ascended, saying: 'For a chariot of spirit has borne me aloft. And now I begin to strip myself that I may clothe myself ...' Peter and James ascended after Jesus. In the first place they saw and heard wars and trumpets; passing further up, they saw and heard the angelic hosts but they were not permitted to ascend further into the presence of the majesty. Then the other disciples summoned them back to earth and learned what they had seen of the exalted Christ.

Irrespective of the pedigree of the teaching itself, there are several details of interest here. The epistolary form is reminiscent of the beginning of the Book of Revelation, where the risen LORD sends letters to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2–3); the ascent of Peter and James is reminiscent of the ascent of John (Rev. 4.1–2) and the ascent of Paul (2 Cor. 12.1–4); and Jesus being carried up in the chariot of the spirit resembles the opening line of one of the *Odes of Solomon*: 'I went up into the light of truth as into a chariot ... (*Ode* 38). We may conclude, then, that the components of the genre which carried the secret teaching were well attested elsewhere in known Christian texts; there must have been disciples who practised the apocalyptists' ascent and, like them, recounted what they had seen. It is unlikely that prominent figures such as John and Paul are recorded in the New Testament as having experienced the ascent if it was totally alien to the teaching of Jesus and the tradition of the churches. If Jesus himself had practised such ascents, what happened to the record of his visionary experiences? If we compare what is recorded in later sources about first-century Jewish mystics, that they had an inner group of close disciples but a wider circle of followers, we should expect that the key teachings were revealed only to a favoured group. There are anachronisms in the accounts, such as Sages named who lived after the destruction of the temple, but there must have been some foundation for the story that Rabbi Nehunya ben Ha-Qanah used to sit expounding all the matter of the Merkavah, the descent and the ascent, how one descends unto and how one ascends from (the Merkavah).[48] This is how the Christian tradition remembers Jesus: with an inner group and then a wider circle of followers. If we take into account all the early texts, then Jesus, too, taught about the heavenly ascent, but only to his inner circle.

Another early revelation discourse is the *Dialogue of the Saviour* which may date from the second century or even earlier. Unlike the *Apocryphon of James* it has no framework narrative, but seems to be a collection of sayings, similar to the *Gospel of Thomas* or the much debated and elusive Q, which has been expanded by questions from the disciples and answers from the LORD. The LORD lays his hands on Judas, Matthew and Mary, and they (or perhaps only Judas, it is not clear) have a vision of a high place and of 'the abyss below'. Much of the revelation concerns the spiritual garments, 'the garments in which we shall be clothed [when] we leave the corruption of the [flesh]' (*Dialogue* 143).

The *Epistle of the Apostles* is also thought to be a mid-second-century composition, and its significance lies chiefly in the fact that it has the form of a special revelation of the risen LORD but is not in any sense a Gnostic text. It has been suggested that this was 'orthodox' Christianity taking over and using a typical Gnostic form, 'an attempt to combat Gnostic opponents with their own weapons'.[49] It will be recalled that Daniélou made an exactly opposite suggestion, namely that the Gnostics chose the revelation discourse form in order to give an air of authenticity to their own compositions.[50] After a conventional account of the life of Jesus, there follows a post-resurrection revelation which forms the bulk of the text. 'But we touched him that we might truly know whether he had risen in the flesh, and we fell on our faces confessing our sin that we had been unbelieving. Then the LORD our Redeemer said: "Rise up and I will reveal to you what is above the heaven and your rest that is in the kingdom of heaven. For my Father has given me the power to take up you and those who believe in me"' (*Ep. Apost.* 12).

Although there is no Gnostic terminology as such, the text deals with very similar ideas. We could almost be reading an account of the Gnostic system transferred into a 'conventional' Christian or Jewish setting. The opposite is more likely, namely that the *Epistle of the Apostles* gives the early 'orthodox' version of what is more extensively recorded elsewhere in Gnostic guise. The LORD gives details of his descent as Gabriel: 'On that day when I took the form of the angel Gabriel, I appeared to Mary and spoke with her. Her heart received me and she believed; I formed myself and entered into her womb; I became flesh' (*Ep. Apost.* 14). The description is reminiscent of Isaiah's vision in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 10, and is clearly a part of the earliest tradition, but not obviously present in the New Testament. The LORD reveals the time and the manner of his second coming and shows how prophecies have been fulfilled. These were his own earlier prophecies, since he had spoken through the ancient prophets. The fulfilment of his earlier prophecies is the guarantee of his present sayings. 'All that I said by the prophets was thus performed and has taken place and is completed in

me, for I spoke in [or by] them. How much more will what I myself have made known to you really happen, that he who has sent me may be glorified by you and by those who believe in me' (*Ep. Apost.* 19).

He predicts the natural and supernatural phenomena which will precede the judgement: hailstones, plagues and stars falling from heaven. As in the Synoptic Apocalypses and the Book of Revelation, the time of the disaster is also the time of suffering for the faithful, suffering which, true to the apocalyptic tradition, is explained as a test of faith: 'If they suffer torment, such suffering will be a test for them whether they have faith and whether they keep in mind these words of mine and obey my commandment' (*Ep. Apost.* 36). The Ethiopic text at one point seems to associate the heavenly revelation with baptism: 'You have revealed to them what is in heaven ... [for] by my hand they receive the baptism of life and the forgiveness of sin' (*Ep. Apost.* 42). It ends with a description of the ascension: There is thunder, lightning and an earthquake, the heavens open and a cloud takes the LORD away. The voice of many angels is heard, welcoming their priest to the light of glory. *Note again that it is Jesus the Priest.*

The most remarkable feature of the *Epistle of the Apostles*, apart from its sober ordinariness in comparison with other post-resurrection revelations, is its clear demonstration of the earliest Christian belief that Jesus had been the manifestation of *yhwh* as Gabriel.[51] He had come to Mary and taken human flesh, and he had spoken through the ancient prophets.[52] Whatever date may eventually be assigned to the *Epistle of the Apostles*, it is in touch with very early Palestinian Christianity and expresses this tradition in the form of a post-resurrection discourse.

Another text chosen by Schneemelcher as a 'Dialogue of the Redeemer' is the *Book of Thomas*. Dates ranging from the second to the early fourth century have been suggested for the work which is known only from a Coptic text found at Nag Hammadi. It is assumed that Coptic was not the original language, and that the book originated in East Syria, the home of the other Judas Thomas traditions. It carries, however, the same traditions as Egyptian texts, showing that these traditions, wherever they originate, were not an isolated phenomenon. Most significant for our purposes is the fact that the text seems to be composite. The framework is a revelation discourse ('the secret words which the Saviour spoke to Judas Thomas and which I, Matthew, wrote down'), but the body of the text is described as a Platonizing Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom writing.[53] In other words, an earlier Wisdom text has been taken over and passed on as the words of Jesus. This could indicate that teachings alien to anything that Jesus could have taught or known were incorporated into 'heretical' texts, or it could indicate that Jesus was known to have stood in a particular tradition.

A similar process of incorporation can be seen by comparing the non-Christian *Letter of Eugnostos* and the Christianized version of the same text known as the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ*. The *Letter*, which was incorporated and presented as the words of Jesus, is based on beliefs which go back to the pre-monotheistic religion of the first temple in Jerusalem, and which, as I have argued elsewhere, formed the original basis for Christian theology.[54] Where those beliefs were current and who wrote them down as the *Letter* is a question for another time. What is highly significant is that material such as this in the *Letter* was attributed to Jesus. The language may be that of Hellenized Judaism but the ideas are not. It is misleading to say that the *Letter* was a 'non-Christian Gnostic tractate modified in order to express newly acquired Christian beliefs or to attract Christians to Gnostic teachings or perhaps for both reasons'.[55] It is in fact the expression of non-Deuteronomic/pre-Deuteronomic Hebrew ideas, evidence that they had survived the 'reform' which had promoted one particular type of monotheism.[56] The setting for this Christian version of the text is, again, a post-resurrection revelation discourse, this time to twelve men and seven women assembled on a mountain in Galilee. The Saviour appears like a 'great angel of light' (cf. Rev. 1.12) and reveals to them the system of the heavenly powers and the relationship between the LORD of the universe and the heavenly beings known as the sons of God, those whom Philo called the 'powers' (*Wisdom of Jesus Christ* 98–100). Beneath the language of a later age there is discernible a description of the incarnation as the presence in human form of all the powers, exactly as described in Colossians: 'In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell' (Col. 1.19).

There is no shortage of post-resurrection revelation discourses with their descriptions of ascent. The settings are all broadly the same, even though the disciples present vary from one text to another. Eusebius knew that many had received such revelations: 'Paul ... committed nothing to writing but his very short epistles; and yet he had countless unutterable things to say, for he had reached the vision of the third heaven, had been caught up to the divine paradise itself and had been privileged to hear there unspeakable words. Similar experiences were enjoyed by the rest of the Saviour's pupils ... the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples and countless others besides' (*History* 3.24). What has happened to all these experiences? Was Eusebius writing fiction at this point, or is there a major element of early Christianity missing from our present understanding of its origins? There is certainly a great difference between how the Christians in the middle of the fourth century described their origins, and how those origins are commonly described today. This older understanding is represented by the post-resurrection texts, even though these may, in their present form, be a later version of that tradition.

The problem is to identify the original setting and function of such discourses once our ideas have been set free from the tyranny not only of the Synoptic Jesus but also of the Synoptic Gospels. Schneemelcher's introduction to his section on non-biblical material about Jesus admits that at first sight these revelation texts seem to be 'a motley and manifold collection, the unity of which is at least questionable'.[57] But are they? We have again the problem of presuppositions; the Synoptic Gospel form has been treated as the norm, even though that actual form is unique to the Christian community. It may even be that Mark was the creator of this form, or it may have arisen within the early communities loosely based on contemporary fashions in biography and intended as an exoteric account of the life and teaching of Jesus. There are endless possibilities for speculation. What is certain is that 'this genre of text has no analogies in ancient literature',[58] let alone in Palestine. On the other hand, a literary form known to have been used in Palestine at the time of Jesus, namely an apocalypse or revelation text, is thought to be a secondary addition to Christian tradition and an unpromising source for real information about Jesus. A simple comparison of available literary types would suggest that the revelation discourse is more likely to be the original.

In addition, there are certain characteristics of this revelation which suggest a Palestinian origin. First, the resurrection experience is described in terms of a theophany. Jesus is presented in the same way as *yhwh* had been in the Old Testament. The *Apocryphon of John* begins thus with the heavens opening, great lights and earth tremors. A divine form appears to him, first as a youth, then as an old man and then as a servant. There was, he said, 'a (likeness) with multiple forms in the light and the (forms) appeared through each other and the likeness had three forms'. This is a classic description of a theophany, a mixture of singular and plural forms, as can be seen by comparing it with Abraham's encounter with the three figures at Mamre[59] (Gen. 18), or with Ezekiel's vision of many forms in the fire (Ezek. 1.4–21), or with the inexact description of John's vision of the Lamb, the Angel and the One on the throne (Rev. 5.1–7). There were heated debates among the rabbis in the years after the advent of Christianity: How were they to explain the plurality of divine forms in theophanies? They concluded that the variety of appearances did not indicate a plurality of powers in heaven.[60]

Second, in the *Apocryphon of John*, the Saviour revealed the secrets concerning the origin of the world and the destiny of humanity. There is no obvious parallel to this in the Synoptic Gospels, but there are several parallels in the Jewish mystical and apocalyptic texts. The forbidden things were defined as: 'What is above, what is below, what was beforetime and what will be hereafter' (*m. Hagigah* 2.1). Does this make it more or less likely that such ideas could have come from Jesus?

The *Apocryphon of John* ends with a solemn curse on anyone who betrays or reveals the mysteries which have been revealed: 'Cursed be everyone who will exchange these things for a gift or for food or for clothing or for any other such thing.' A similar curse appears at the end of the Gnostic *Books of Jeu*: 'These mysteries which I give you, preserve, and give them to no man except he be worthy of them ... Preserve them and give them to no one whatsoever for the sake of the good of this whole world.' (*Jeu* 2.43)[61] These must have been intended as secret texts for a chosen circle of initiates only, and yet they apparently record revelations in the manner of an Old Testament theophany. The description of the return of Jesus at the beginning of the *Pistis Sophia* is similar. After an earthquake and great commotion in the heavens, Jesus returns in a blaze of light which dazzles the disciples (*Pistis* 1.3–4). The *Letter of Peter to Philip* has a similar passage (CG VIII.2.134). Peter has gathered the disciples on the Mount of Olives, where they see a vision of great light and hear a voice saying: 'Hear my words that I may send you. Why do you seek after me? I am Jesus Christ who is with you forever.' In the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ* (CG III.4.91), Jesus appeared 'like a great angel of light and his likeness I must not describe'.

The origin of all these phenomena lies in the secret traditions of the priests, who had been required to guard whatever concerned the altar and what was within the veil (Num. 18.7, also LXX Num. 3.10). Anyone other than a priest who approached them would die. One of the secrets of the priesthood must have been experiencing theophany, something described in the ancient high priestly blessing: 'May the LORD make his face/presence shine on you, May the LORD lift up his face/presence upon you' (Num. 6.25–6).[62] At the end of the second temple period, this was one of the forbidden texts, which could be read in public but not explained (*m. Megillah* 4.10). The appearance of the LORD above the ark in the holy of holies had probably been a similar experience, as was John's experience of the risen LORD with the seven lamps (Rev. 1.12–16). The transfiguration was such an experience, when the LORD was seen by the three disciples as a radiant presence, and the experience brought them into a new state of existence.[63]

The Risen LORD

The time has come for a new understanding of Jesus. It has been fashionable to assume that much of 'his' teaching was in fact the product of the early Christian communities; that much of the theology, especially the Christology, was the result of ingenious preachers, squeezing all they could from the Old Testament texts, and then packaging it for the tastes of their potential converts. Layers have been detected in the teachings of Jesus: the *Gospel of Thomas* has the kingdom of God sayings but no Son of Man, so it must be 'early'; the kingdom of

God has receded from Q and the Son of Man as future redeemer has become the key; there are Wisdom sayings with no eschatological expectation, and so forth.[64] Is it not more likely – and I say no more than this – that the original insights, claims, teaching and theology which became Christianity go back to a single source rather than to a series of committees? In other words, could Jesus have been the founder of Christianity after all? The various layers in the tradition could then be a reflection of the development of Jesus' own thought, his own growing awareness of his role and mission. It is commonplace to chart the development of, say, Paul's thought; the early letters are different from those he wrote later in life. Why should the same not be true of Jesus?

It is no longer permissible to take scholarly investigation to a certain position and then allow a patina of piety to restrict access to the most vital questions. Nor is it really satisfactory to define terms and ask questions in such a way that the answer has to be: 'Christianity was all the result of a massive misunderstanding, or the ingenious marketing of usable myths, or some clever confidence trick that has deceived the human race ever since.' The answers from which there is no escape are: Jesus and the beliefs about him were established *immediately after his death* and became the faith of the Church. The question therefore must be: Where did these beliefs originate? It was recognized long ago that so much that would have been vital to understanding Christian origins perished after the wars against Rome. Until recently, the Judaism of the time was reconstructed from texts written many generations after those events, and so there were, unacknowledged, massive anachronisms built into the 'background to the New Testament'. Something of the real situation in Palestine can now be reconstructed from the Qumran material, and it is a very different picture, not least the different texts of the 'familiar' Hebrew Scriptures.

Paul's letters give a glimpse of first-generation Christian beliefs, but not a complete picture. They were written to churches who had already received their first instruction, and would not have needed much further teaching about the life of Jesus. Paul dealt largely with points that needed further clarification. This makes it difficult to estimate the extent to which he was an innovator. There were disagreements in the early Church about what Paul was teaching, but these concerned the role and status of the Jewish Law, not his teaching about Jesus. There is no systematic presentation of his complete teaching about Christ the Redeemer. It is everywhere assumed yet nowhere explained or defended. At the centre of his preaching there was not the teacher from Galilee but the Redeemer from heaven. Why? Paul must have known much about Jesus' life before his conversion experience; afterwards he put a different interpretation on the same facts. Whose interpretation? It must have been that of the Christians to whose belief he was converted, the belief in the Redeemer, the belief of the

Palestinian community a few years after the crucifixion. This was the belief of those who had actually known Jesus. The Jesus who was *only* a teacher from Galilee disappeared from the tradition at a very early date, so early that one wonders if it was ever really very important.[65] If 'Jesus, just the teacher from Galilee' is a fiction of recent New Testament scholarship, might this false norm be the real problem in understanding other early Christian writings?

The dating and classification of early Christian writings is a dangerously subjective business. J. A. T. Robinson showed just how easy it was to question the whole structure when he gave convincing arguments for a comprehensive re-dating.[66] Similarly, there is a tendency to classify according to the categories of a later age. What became the canonical texts are the norm, and all others, together with the ideas they represent, have a lower status. Instead of asking how such 'strange' texts came to be written, we should be asking how they came to be excluded. What tendency in the early churches wanted to marginalize and even eliminate visionary material, and how early was this tendency? One criterion for exclusion was theology, and yet critical study is showing that some early theology was deliberately eliminated from the New Testament texts.[67] Retrojected, this means that we may here also have accepted and used entirely false markers by which to detect primitive belief and to identify the 'original' Jesus.

The Qumran texts have given new insights into the world view of first-century Palestine. The role of the priests and the temple is now seen more clearly than was formerly possible. The Melchizedek text (11QMelch), for example, depicts the heavenly high priest bringing salvation to his people on the great Day of Atonement. The Letter to the Hebrews is similar, and the high priest there is named as Jesus. The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (esp. 4Q Shir. Shabb. 400–409) described the worship in heaven which was the reality underlying the worship in the temple; the Letter to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation assume a similar belief. The Damascus Rule (CD) speaks of the 'hidden things in which all Israel has gone astray' and of 'God in his wonderful mysteries . . .'. Those who hold to the truth are 'destined to live for ever' and to regain the glory of Adam (CD III). The Damascus Rule was a book for priests clinging to their ancient ways, whose leaders had to be learned in the *Book of HGW*, a work we no longer know (CD X, XI, XIV). Josephus records that they were sworn to repeat none of their secrets, to preserve the books of the group and the names of the angels[68] (*War* 2.142). The recurring, one might almost say the major theme of the Qumran Hymns is the knowledge of the divine mysteries which enables the initiates to stand in the presence of the holy ones in the council of heaven. They tell of someone raised to the everlasting height to be part of the congregation of the sons of heaven (1QH XI, XIV, XV, formerly known as III, VI, VII respectively).

There is someone who can say: 'Thou hast shown thine infinite power ... given me knowledge through thy marvellous mysteries and shown thyself mighty within me in the midst of thy marvellous council' (1QH XII, formerly IV). 'Thou hast enlightened me through thy truth in thy marvellous mysteries' (1QH XV, formerly VII). We also read: 'Thou hast taught them thy marvellous mysteries ... that he may stand before thee with the everlasting host ... to be renewed with all the living and to rejoice together with them that know' (1QH XVIII, formerly X); 'The mystery of thy wisdom has opened knowledge to me' (1QH XX, formerly XII); 'The mysteries of thy wisdom make known thy glory' (1QH V, formerly XIII); 'Illumined with perfect light' (1QH XXI, formerly XVIII). There is a description of transformation reminiscent of *1 Enoch* 14 and 71 and of the accounts of the later mystics: 'Shaking and trembling seize me and all my bones are broken; my heart dissolves like wax before fire and my knees are like water ... I rose and stood and my spirit was established in the face of the scourge' (1QH XII, formerly IV). *1 Enoch* is one of the best represented texts at Qumran,[69] and this is important evidence for the priestly traditions there. According to the *Book of Jubilees* Enoch was a priest who burned the incense of the sanctuary (*Jub.* 4.25), was the first to learn 'writing and knowledge and wisdom' (*Jub.* 4.17), and entered the holy of holies (*1 En.*14). The name Enoch probably means the 'taught or initiated one'.[70] When the high priest entered the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement, he was enacting the experience of the mystics and he too entered in great fear (*m. Yoma* 5.1; 7.4; contrast Heb. 10.19: 'We have confidence to enter the sanctuary ...').

The priests and their traditions passed into the young Church; a great number of them were 'obedient to the faith' (Acts 6.7). The exact relationship between the high priests and the early Christians, especially the family of Jesus, invites speculation. John, one of the three associated with the secret tradition, was known to the high priest (John 18.15). Eusebius records that John had worn the insignia of a high priest, the golden plate bearing the Name (*History* 3.31). Presumably this means he had the role of high priest in the Church. The Letter of Jude quotes from *1 Enoch*, the repository of priestly mystical traditions. In our time, access to books is commonplace, but this was not the case in first-century CE Palestine. How then did one of Jesus' family know that book well enough to quote from it? Jerome quotes the lost *Gospel of the Hebrews* which says that Jesus gave his linen shroud to the high priest's servant after the resurrection and then appeared to James the Righteous, who was one of his family and another of the three associated with the secret tradition. He was also the first bishop of the Jerusalem church. Eisenmann has recently suggested that there are similarities between the Letter of James in the New Testament and some Qumran texts, that James the Righteous may have been the leader known at Qumran as the

Teacher of Righteousness. Some of the Qumran texts (e.g. 4Q266, said to be the missing last column of the Damascus Rule) would then be products of the Palestinian Christian community.[71] Whether or not he is correct in all details, the similarities are certainly striking, and must be borne in mind when attempting to reconstruct what would and would not have been possible in early Christianity. Men of Jesus' family were clearly in the same mould as the writers of the Scrolls, and James was also closely linked to the temple.

Further, James had the authority to impose temple purity regulations on Paul (Acts 21.21–4). Hegesippus, 'who belonged to the first generation after the apostles' (Eusebius, *History* 2.23), records that James was an ascetic from birth, consuming neither meat nor wine and refusing to wash, shave or anoint himself with oil. He wore priestly robes of linen and used to enter the sanctuary of the temple alone to pray for the forgiveness of the people's sins. Such a description, if it is to be taken literally, can only mean that he was a high priest, performing the ritual of the Day of Atonement. His testimony to Jesus as Son of Man, sitting at the right hand and destined to return with the clouds of heaven, caused his death in the temple at the instigation of the scribes and Pharisees. A Rechabite tried in vain to save him. He was buried in the temple where he died and the siege of Jerusalem began shortly afterwards, as punishment for the crime (Eusebius, *History* 2.23).[72] There was a book known as the *Ascents of James,* which was used by the Ebionites,[73] and one wonders what these 'ascents', *anabathmoi*, might have been, given the known traditions of the priesthood and the fact that Merkavah mystics practised and taught in the temple.[74]

The Rechabite who tried to save James was one of a priestly family. In the time of Jeremiah Rechabites had been ascetics, refusing to build houses or to plant crops, and abstaining from wine (Jer. 35.6–7). John the Baptist, also of a priestly family, abstained from wine all his life and lived in the desert. He could well have been a Rechabite. There is a work of uncertain date, the *History of the Rechabites*, extant in many ancient languages but probably originating in Hebrew. The present form of the text is Christian,[75] but underlying it is a pre-Christian original which tells how the Rechabites left Jerusalem after the king who succeeded Josiah [the king who purged the temple in about 621 BCE] had tried to persuade them to abandon their way of life. This is described as 'forsaking the LORD and abandoning the covenant' (*History of the Rechabites* 10). Abstaining from wine must have been the outward sign of a particular religious tradition. They had been rescued from prison by angels and led to a paradise place, a holy land. They were called the Blessed Ones, and no ordinary mortals were able to visit them. Their assembly was like the angels of heaven, and the angels of God lived with them. They were dressed in garments of glory and they offered prayer day and night. Their wives accompanied them, but they lived apart.

Who might these Rechabites have been and how did they come to be called the Blessed Ones? Perhaps we have here the memory of the *merkavah*,[76] the chariot throne in the temple, which the chosen few were able to contemplate and thus achieve the angelic state. The sons of *rechab* would have been priests devoted to the heavenly chariot throne,[77] and when the temple 'reformers' had wanted them to abandon their traditions, they refused.[78] They left Jerusalem for another place, where they lived a monastic existence, the life of the angels. The Talmud records that they were also known as *nozerim*, 'the diligent observers',[79] a significant name, perhaps, because the Christians were known as Nazoreans. It was one of these Rechabites who tried to prevent the death of James, the leader of the Jerusalem Christians and a guardian of the secret tradition, a man, says Eusebius, 'universally regarded as the most righteous of men because of the heights of philosophy and religion which he scaled in his life' (*History* 2.23).

The *Odes of Solomon* may provide yet another piece of evidence to link Jesus to the ascent tradition of the temple, and its secrets. It is not possible to give an exact date and provenance for the *Odes*, but their similarities to the Qumran Hymns and to the Fourth Gospel, and the possibility that they were known by Ignatius of Antioch, indicate that they were probably in existence at the end of the first century CE in a Hebrew Christian community. Most striking are the passages which seem to be Christ himself speaking. It has been customary to explain these as an example of early Christian prophecy, speaking in the name of the LORD. The very strangeness of the words and ideas attributed to Jesus in the *Odes* compels us to ask if there is here an authentic memory of the words of Jesus. Could an 'early' community have falsified the tradition to this extent, especially as it has echoes in the 'orthodox' writings of John and Ignatius? The Christ of the *Odes* practises the mystical ascent:

> [The Spirit] brought me forth before the LORD's face
> And because I was the Son of Man, I was named the Light,
> the Son of God;
> Because I was the most glorious among the glorious ones,
> And the greatest among the great ones ...
> And he anointed me with his perfection
> And I became one of those who are near him. (*Ode* 36.3,4,6)

Another describes the Merkavah experience as an ascent in a chariot to learn the truth:

> I went up into the light of truth as into a chariot,
> And the truth led me and caused me to come ...
> And there was no danger for me because I constantly walked
> with him. (*Ode* 38.1,5)[80]

Christ speaks of his mystery, his faith and his knowledge, and about a garment that will be shown to them (*Ode* 8). He speaks of gathering in the Gentiles and capturing the world for the Most High (*Ode* 10). He speaks of being exalted by the Most High and being raised to understanding, loosing all who have been bound, and giving knowledge and resurrection (*Ode* 17). In *Ode* 22 he describes descending from on high and defeating the seven-headed dragon. In *Ode* 25 he speaks of a garment of the Spirit that replaces the garment of skin. *Ode* 28 is inspired by Psalm 22 and *Ode* 31 by Isaiah 53.

It is not impossible that these *Odes* incorporate material from Jesus himself, or that they are in his style. The question is: How much of such a Merkavah mystic can be recovered from the Gospel pictures of Jesus? First, we do not know what were the influences on his boyhood. We do not know what tradition formed his mind and shaped the ideas he was later to preach, although we do know that he impressed temple teachers when he was only a child (Luke 2.46–48). The fact that members of his family (John the Baptist,[81] James the Righteous[82] and Jude[83]) all had links to the esoterica of the priesthood must make this at least a likely context for his formative years. Second, there could have been a gradual process of recognition, reflected in some of the parables and sayings about the Kingdom which were autobiographical. In the Synoptic accounts, these are the only teachings associated with the 'secrets' or the 'mysteries' of the Kingdom, and were explained privately to the disciples (e.g. Matt. 13.10–17). The seed grew secretly, it began as small as a mustard seed and grew to be great; or it was found as a treasure or a pearl of great price, and everything had to be given up for it. The Kingdom was not an external phenomenon but something discovered within (Luke 17.21), which was manifested in the overthrow of evil (Luke 11.20). These were Jesus' own accounts of his spiritual growth.

The accounts of the baptism show that this was a crucial moment in Jesus' life. He saw the Spirit of God come upon him and declare him to be the beloved Son (Matt. 3.16–17 and parallels). The Codex Bezae of Luke 3.22 has: 'Today I have begotten you', quoting instead Psalm 2.7. Perhaps this was the point at which Jesus became fully conscious of his role. The story is not told in the first person, but neither is the account of the temptation in the desert, which must have come from Jesus himself unless it is a complete fiction.

After the baptism, there was the time in the desert when Jesus was tempted by Satan, was with the wild beasts and was served by the angels (Mark 1.12–13). The sequence of Satan, beasts and angels suggests that these beasts were not the wild creatures of the Judaean desert, but rather the beasts of the visionaries, the living creatures around the throne (Rev. 4.6). The angels were his servants (cf. the worship of the enthroned Lamb, Rev. 5.6–13) or 'I was the greatest of the great ones'

(*Odes of Solomon* 36.4). In the account of the conflict with Satan (Matt. 4/Luke 4), the point at issue is: 'If you are the Son of God . . .', as if the conflicts record Jesus' coming to terms with his new situation. The visionary experiences of being taken to a great height, the temple pinnacle or a high mountain, are authentic. Ezekiel had been transported in the Spirit to the temple and to a high mountain (Ezek. 8.3; 40.2); Habakkuk was stationed on a high tower to receive his vision (Hab. 2.1–2); Enoch was lifted up by angels to a high place where he saw a tower above the earth (*1 En.* 87.3); Abraham stood on a high place when he had his vision of the throne (*Ap. Abr.* 17.3); John was carried to a high mountain to see the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21.10). Origen quotes from the lost *Gospel of the Hebrews* in which Jesus himself says: 'My Mother the Holy Spirit took me by one of my hairs and carried me to the great mountain Tabor' (*Commentary on John* 2.12). Jesus' vision of the cities of the world reminds us that there had been sons of God who were convinced by the words of Azazel, bound themselves to him with a great oath and then came to earth to rule it and destroy it (*1 En.* 6).

After the desert experience, according to Luke, Jesus claimed to be the fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 61. The Spirit was upon him, he had been anointed and was to inaugurate the great year of Jubilee (Luke 4.16–21). In the Melchizedek text (11QMelch) the same passage in Isaiah is applied to the Jubilee brought by the heavenly high priest Melchizedek, who is the LORD himself, the great year of Jubilee which culminates in the final Day of Atonement. The hostile reaction to this revelation will have led to the formation of an inner group to whom the secret could be communicated. Thus the disciples were chosen, and the Transfiguration made the inner group aware of Jesus' experience of transformation. The description is authentic; as Jesus was praying, his face shone and his clothes became dazzling white. The voice from heaven this time addressed the disciples: 'This is my Son, the Chosen One.' Again this is authentic. The fact that the disciples saw the brightness means that they had become a part of it.

Both Luke (24.25–27) and John (5.39), in very different contexts, record that Jesus found himself in the Old Testament. This is an extraordinary claim, and must be one of the clearest pieces of evidence that Jesus saw himself as the LORD. In first-century Palestine, such a belief would have been possible for someone who had achieved the mystical ascent and had been transformed. It is only traditions recorded much later in *3 Enoch* which show clearly how a human could ascend to the presence of the throne and become 'the lesser LORD'. Heated debates in the early Christian period, however, as to whether or not there were two powers in heaven, show just where the Christian claim lay. *'Being' the* LORD *had been part of the tradition of the high priests and before them, of the kings.* They had worn the Name on their foreheads.[84] The

principle of temple practice, 'on earth as it is in heaven', meant that the act of atonement, in reality the work of the LORD (Deut. 32.43), was enacted on earth by the high priest. This was the suffering and death that was necessary for the Messiah.

In my book *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God*, I showed how the first Christians recognized Jesus as *yhwh*, the LORD, the Son of God Most High. This claim came from Jesus himself, who had attained the ultimate mystical experience of the high priesthood, seen the throne and been transformed by that experience. The messianic titles Son of Man and Son of God, and the role of the mysterious Servant, resulted from that experience, as did the realization that the coming of the LORD to his people meant the great Day of Atonement when he took upon himself the sins and sicknesses of the Creation (Isa. 53.4, cf. Matt. 8.17), and gave his own life to his people (Isa. 53.10). Thus it was that Peter could say 'You denied the Holy and Righteous One . . . and killed the Author of Life' (Acts 3.14–15).

Once Jesus is set back within the temple tradition, there is a whole new landscape for the study of Christian origins. The pre-existent and adoptionist Christologies are seen to be both compatible and original. The 'knowledge' characteristic of the non-canonical gospels would have originated in esoteric teaching such as was characteristic of priestly groups, and perhaps even underlying Isaiah 53.11. The central themes of sacrifice, redemption and atonement can be seen in their original setting, and Jesus' disregard for the purity laws can be seen as the practical enactment of priestly atonement, bringing the excluded sinner back into the community rather than excluding him.

The various 'layers' and inconsistencies in the tradition about Jesus originated first in the development of his own thought and only later in the various groups which had access only to certain parts of his teaching. Before his experience of becoming the Great Angel, the LORD, he taught as a wise man and a healer, like many others of his time, warning of the judgement to come. This has been amply demonstrated in the books which set Jesus in his contemporary context. For many, this is what he remained. Once Jesus had achieved his transforming vision, he spoke as Son of Man, the Man who had passed beyond 'death' and become an emissary from the other world. When the disciples realized this, they were able to see the glory. The confession at Caesarea was followed by the Transfiguration. The inner group who received the 'post-resurrection' teaching would have had no need of a passion narrative or a future judgement with the Son of Man. Thus the *Gospel of Thomas*. Their Son of Man would have been a heavenly revealer rather than a future judge. Thus the Gospel of John. The future coming of the LORD in judgement would have been given as exoteric teaching, such as the parable of the sheep and the goats, but for the inner circle, the eschatology was realized, the judgement was

past, and eternal life had begun. Whoever had seen Jesus had had the transforming vision (John 14.9). The other-worldly Jesus of the Fourth Gospel may well have been drawn from life, and the underlying strata of the Book of Revelation may well have been what they claimed to be: 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show to his servants what must soon take place' (Rev. 1.1).[85]

What Chernus wrote of the Merkavah mystics is equally true of the earliest Christian community: 'The unique contribution of the esoteric tradition seems to be the teaching that those who are willing to risk the initiatory death will in return be capable of experiencing a richer and fuller life, one which is enhanced by a more complete experience of God'. On the other hand this full and immediate revelation turns out to be too much for the community as a whole to bear, and therefore it is not useful in enriching and guiding the ongoing life of that community.[86]

The *Gospel of Philip* (CG II.3) knew all this:

> The Nazarene is he who reveals what is hidden ... Those who say that the LORD died first and then rose up are in error for he rose up first and then he died. If one does not first attain the resurrection, will he not die? (56).

> Jesus did not reveal himself in the manner in which he was, but it was in the manner in which they would be able to see him that he revealed himself. He revealed himself to them all. He revealed himself to the great as great. He revealed himself to the small as small. He revealed himself to the angels as an angel and to men as a man. Because of this, his word hid itself from everyone. Some indeed saw him, thinking that they were seeing themselves, but when he appeared to his disciples in glory on the mount, he was not small. He became great, but he made his disciples great that they might be able to see him in his greatness. (57–8)

There was far more to the teaching of Jesus than is recorded in the four canonical Gospels. 'James the Righteous, John and Peter were entrusted by the LORD after his resurrection with the higher knowledge' (Eusebius, *History* 2.1). *James and John were remembered in Church tradition as having been high priests, and Peter as the first Bishop of Rome.*

2

THE TIME IS FULFILLED; JESUS AND THE JUBILEE[1]

As the Millennium approached, there was considerable interest in the Old Testament idea of Jubilee, but the New Testament application was unexplored. The Jubilee is a key element in understanding both the ministry of Jesus and Palestine in the first century CE.

The Old Testament prescriptions for the Jubilee year are set out in Leviticus 25: the land is to lie fallow and all people return to their own property. 'Proclaim liberty, *d'ror*, throughout the land ... each of you shall return to his property and to his family' (Lev. 25.10). Leased land returned to its original owners, it being against the Law to buy and sell land in perpetuity. In addition, every seventh year was a Sabbath year in which land lay fallow, and all Hebrews who had been enslaved for debt were released and the debt thereby cancelled. The oldest form of these laws occurs in the Book of the Covenant: a Hebrew slave was to go free in the seventh year (Exod. 21.2) and the land was to lie fallow in the seventh year, with the vineyards and olives trees unharvested (Exod. 23.10–11). This is directly linked to observing the weekly Sabbath as a time when animals and slaves could be refreshed (Exod. 23.12) and both follow the commandment not to oppress a stranger because Israel was enslaved in Egypt. These were laws against exploitation. The land law appears also in Leviticus 25.2–7 and an expanded version of the law of slavery and remission of debt, *s'emittah*, LXX *'aphesis*, appears in Deuteronomy 15.1–18.

The laws of Sabbath year and Jubilee were given on Sinai (Lev. 25.1), in other words, they were very important laws, and to break them brought severe punishment. Jeremiah condemned the aristocracy in Jerusalem for flouting the slavery law, when they released their Hebrew slaves in the seventh year and then re-enslaved them. Their punishment would be slavery to the King of Babylon and they would be set free to endure sword, pestilence and famine (Jer. 34.8–22). The Chronicler observed that the exile also fulfilled Jeremiah's words, for the land was at last permitted to enjoy its (overdue) Sabbaths (2 Chron. 36.21). When the second temple community was established, they took a solemn oath to obey this law; they swore first not to intermarry with other nations, second not to trade on the Sabbath and third that in the seventh year they would forego all crops and the exaction of all debt (Neh. 10.30ff.). In the Maccabean War, the city of Beth Zur was unable to withstand siege because they had no provisions; it was the Sabbath year and there was no food in store (1 Macc. 6.49, 63).

There was disagreement as to whether the Jubilee year was the

seventh Sabbath year itself, or the year which followed, i.e. the forty-ninth or the fiftieth year. The traditional compromise was that it was reckoned as fifty years during the first temple period and forty-nine in the second.[2] The fifty-year reckoning would have entailed two fallow years in succession, one sabbatical, the other Jubilee, but this does seem to be implied by Leviticus 25.21: 'I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year so that the land will bring forth fruit for three years' (not two). Isaiah's oracle of hope to Hezekiah also implies two fallow years at the Jubilee; the liberation of Jubilee is the prophetic sign of the liberation of Jerusalem from the Assyrian threat. 'And this shall be the sign for you: this year eat what grows of itself and in the second year what springs of it; then in the third sow and reap plant vineyards and eat their fruit' (Isa. 37.30).

The command to eat only what grows of itself in the field (Lev. 25.12) and the older injunction to share this equally with the poor and the animals (Exod. 23.11), indicate that the Sabbath year was a time when the land and the people returned to their original state. When God created the human pair, he made provision for their food. 'Behold I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, I have given every green plant for food' (Gen. 1.29–30). This was the state of creation which God saw was very good before resting on the seventh day. It was only later, after the disobedience, that Adam was told that his food would be won from the soil by the sweat of his face (Gen. 3.19). In the Sabbath year, all Israel returned to the original state of creation, sharing equally with the animals whatever grew of itself from the earth.

The Jubilee, the Sabbath of Sabbaths, was proclaimed on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 25.9) and so the custom of Jubilee must be understood in this context. Since atonement was itself a rite which restored the eternal covenant and enabled the whole creation, not just the community of Israel, to be restored to its original state,[3] the Jubilee was a practical application of the atonement. *The key figure in the rite of atonement was the high priest who was the visible presence of the* LORD *on earth,*[4] *and, just as the* LORD *had ordered the creation at the beginning, so he recreated it on the Day of Atonement at the New Year. The Jubilee recreated society by restoring people to their own land and by removing the burden of slavery and debt.*

The LXX of Leviticus 25.10 translates the key word *d'ror*, liberty, by *'aphesis*, remission, showing that by that period (perhaps the third century BCE), the characteristics of Sabbath year and Jubilee had combined, even though it is the tradition that the Jubilee was not literally observed during the second temple period.[5] The Jubilee was still used as a measurement of time, as can be seen from the Book of Jubilees.

The Jubilee was closely linked to the role of the Servant of the LORD, Isaiah's depiction of the royal high priest of the first temple.[6] He was to release prisoners (Isa. 42.7), he was to bring back Jacob and gather in Israel, establish the land and allocate desolate inheritances (Isa. 49.5,9). In their present context in the exilic prophecies of Isaiah, the reference is to the return from Babylon, showing that Jubilee was reinterpreted for the changed situation. The Targum understood these passages to mean that the Servant would bring back the exiles of the Diaspora and also bring Israel back to the fear of the LORD, another adaptation of the concept of Jubilee.

Isaiah 61.1–9 is a significant Jubilee passage; someone anointed with the Spirit is to bring good tidings to the poor, comfort the broken hearted and proclaim liberty, *d'ror*, to captives. This is the year of the LORD's favour, in other words, the Jubilee, and also the Day of Judgement, the Day of the LORD. The Song of Moses shows that when the LORD appeared to avenge the blood of his servants,[7] he atoned the land of his people (Deut. 32.43). That the Day of the LORD was also the Day of Atonement when the heavenly high priest emerged from the sanctuary is confirmed by later texts such as the Assumption of Moses 10.[8] The anointed one in Isaiah 61 was to restore some ousted people to their former inheritance; they would be recognized as the LORD's people and given their rightful portion of the land (Isa. 61.7). Here the concept of Jubilee gives hope to the dispossessed who had been deprived of their rights and their inheritance when the exiles returned from Babylon to establish the second temple. The indigenous but ousted worshippers of the LORD became the new exiles in their own land (Isa. 63.15–19),[9] and the Jubilee came to express the hopes of these dispossessed people, that one day their land would be restored to them. They called the new Jerusalem the harlot (Isa. 57.7–10) and they threatened her with judgement from the temple itself (Isa. 66.5–6). Their spiritual descendants produced the Book of Revelation.

The Jubilee was used to measure time in the second temple period even when a literal application of the land laws was no longer possible.[10] Later tradition divided the history of Israel into Jubilees, but the remarkable coincidence of important events and Jubilee years does suggest that the Jubilee system was a significant factor in Israel's actual history and not just in the memory of its historians. There was a Jubilee during the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign, probably the reason for the temple refurbishment (2 Kings 22.8 implies that the temple repairs uncovered the lawbook that led to his 'purge' whereas 2 Chronicles 34 implies that the temple repairs were the final act of his religious purge). Reckoning a fifty-year Jubilee in the first temple period, this gives 622 BCE as the date of the temple restoration, because there was another Jubilee in the fourteenth year after Jerusalem was conquered, 572 BCE, the twenty-fifth year of Ezekiel's exile (Ezek. 40.1). His vision of the

restoration was a Jubilee vision, with the LORD returning to his place in the temple (Ezek. 43.1–5) and the land being allocated once more among the twelve tribes (Ezek. 48.1–29). Reckoning back by fifty-year Jubilees, 722 BCE was also a Jubilee year and the most likely date for Isaiah's Jubilee sign (Isa. 37.30–32). Although the oracle is now incorporated in material from the time of Hezekiah and Sennacherib's invasion, it probably belongs with the earlier oracles to Ahaz. Assyria invaded and occupied the northern kingdom of Israel in 724 BCE and captured Samaria after a long siege in 721 BCE. The Jubilee oracle was probably a sign of hope for Jerusalem at that time.

Reckoning from Ezekiel's Jubilee vision in 572 BCE gives another Jubilee year in 522 BCE, a possible date for Zerubbabel and Joshua's coming to Jerusalem and attempting to re-establish worship there.[11] There were also forty-nine-year Jubilees in 473 BCE and 424 BCE. One possible date for Ezra's return to Jerusalem is 428 BCE,[12] and it could well have been the Jubilee in 424 BCE that prompted both this return and the covenant renewal when all 'foreign' wives were abandoned (Ezra 10.10–11). There was certainly some event at this time that caused many worshippers of the LORD to feel they had been excluded and that Jerusalem would be punished for what had happened. Daniel's seventy weeks of years were reckoned from this time 'when the word went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem' (Dan. 9.25), and the seventy weeks of years were to end when transgression, sin and iniquity were finally removed and Jerusalem was destroyed (Dan. 9.24, 26). The Day of Atonement was also the Day of the LORD, the Day of Judgement.[13] The description indicates a final Day of Atonement when prophecy and visions are fulfilled and the Anointed One appears.

The seventy weeks of years, 490 years, were ten Jubilees, and the alternative way of reckoning this period was as ten Jubilees. Jewish tradition remembered that the 490 years ended in 68 CE; calculation from the second temple Jubilee sequence beginning in 424 BCE gives 66 CE. A two-year discrepancy is hardly significant in the light of what this implies, namely that the tenth Jubilee began in 17/19 CE. *In other words, tenth Jubilee fervour and expectations were the context for the ministry of Jesus.*

The Qumran Melchizedek text (11QMelch), written in the middle of the first century BCE but not necessarily composed at that time, describes the events of the tenth Jubilee.[14] Only fragments have survived so it is possible that the complete text described the other nine Jubilees also. The text begins by quoting the Jubilee laws in Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 15, interpreting them 'for the last days'. The captives who are to return are people whose teachers have been 'hidden and kept secret' and these 'people of the inheritance of Melchizedek' will return. There is insufficient text for certainty, but this looks like a group who have been secretly preserving the teachings of the first temple, when there was a Melchizedek priesthood. In the tenth Jubilee they

would 'return', perhaps to the temple as priests? The liberty of the Jubilee is interpreted as release from iniquities, the beginning of the atonement which will occur on the Day of Atonement at the end of the tenth Jubilee. The return and the release from iniquity were to happen in the first week, the first seven years, of the tenth Jubilee i.e. approximately 19–26 CE. If Jesus was born in 7/6 BCE[15] and was baptized when he was about thirty years old (Luke 3.23), he began his ministry during the crucial first 'week' of the tenth Jubilee.

11QMelch alludes many times to the Jubilee oracle in Isaiah 61: '... the LORD God has anointed me ... to proclaim liberty to the captives' (Isa. 61.1, 'proclaim liberty', *d'ror*, being a quotation from Lev. 25.10). The coming Melchizedek is to rescue his own people (? the sons of light, but the text is damaged here) from the power of Belial. There was to be a messenger of peace announcing to Zion 'Your God reigns', thus fulfilling Isaiah 52.7. The messenger was probably Melchizedek, but again the text is too damaged for certainty. He would be the anointed one prophesied in Daniel 9.25, but described in 11QMelch as 'anointed of the Spirit', a conflation with Isaiah 61.1. The anointed one would instruct in the end times of the world[16] and some people (the text is broken here) would establish the covenant, another Day of Atonement theme.

This gives the context for the opening scenes of the Gospels. In the first week of the tenth Jubilee Jesus was baptized with the Spirit, which was interpreted as his anointing (Acts 10.38). After his time in the desert he returned to Galilee announcing 'the time is fulfilled', i.e. the tenth Jubilee is inaugurated and 'Melchizedek' is here, 'the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent', because the final Day of Atonement was also at hand at hand, 'and believe the good news' of the Jubilee release. Luke's account of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth shows that he claimed to have inaugurated the final Jubilee; no other interpretation can be put on the claim to have fulfilled *that day* (Luke 4.21) the Jubilee prophecy in Isaiah 61 which was central to the Melchizedek expectations of the time.[17]

The first miracle was an exorcism (Mark 1.21–26), setting one of his own people free from the power of Belial. He spoke of a woman bound by Satan and released her (Luke 13.16), of slaves to sin whom the Son could release (John 8.31–38). He forgave sins and illustrated his teaching with a parable of two debtors whose debts were cancelled (Luke 7. 41–48). The healing miracles restored to the community people who would have been excluded as ritually unfit: the disabled, the lepers, a woman who was bleeding. This was the great ingathering of the Jubilee. Jesus spoke of those who would inherit the land (Matt. 5.5) and at the Last Supper, he spoke of the New Covenant and of his blood poured out for the remission of sins (*'aphesis*, the Jubilee word, Matt. 26.28).

The Jubilee also brought the Day of Judgement, vividly described in 11QMelch. Melchizedek would take his place in the heavenly assembly and, as described in Psalm 82.1, begin to judge the *'elohim*, the heavenly beings. This was to be the year of Melchizedek's favour, a very significant alteration to Isaiah 61.2, which proclaims the Jubilee as the year of the LORD's favour. Similarly with Psalm 82.1; it is Melchizedek who takes his place in the heavenly assembly, whereas in the original Psalm it is God. *The only possible conclusion is that Melchizedek, the heavenly high priest, was the* LORD, *the God of Israel.* In 11QMelch he has armies and brings the vengeance of divine judgement, and these were expected to appear in the tenth Jubilee. 11QMelch explains why Jesus is depicted as judge and warrior in the Book of Revelation and why the Book of Revelation is described as 'The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place' (Rev.1.1). These were the teachings of Melchizedek, revealing in the tenth Jubilee the end times of the world. When the Lamb takes his place in the heavenly assembly (Rev. 5.6–14 fulfilling Ps. 82.1) the judgement begins. The Word of God rides out from heaven, wearing a white robe sprinkled with blood; he is the high priest who has taken the atonement blood into the holy of holies. He rides out with his with his army (Rev. 19.11–16) and the judgement follows.

The Letter to the Hebrews explained the role of Jesus as the new Melchizedek (Heb. 7.11), the one who had attained the priesthood by ascent, being raised up, not by descent from Aaron.[18] The crucifixion and ascension had been recognized as the enthronement of the Lamb, exactly as described in Hebrews 10.12: 'When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, there to wait until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.' The remainder of the tenth Jubilee was the time of waiting until the final battle and victory when the Great High Priest would emerge to complete the Atonement and conclude the Jubilee.

The years of the tenth Jubilee were difficult in Palestine; famines in the 40s and early 60s only made the situation worse and distorted the price of grain. In the end, oppressive action on the part of the Roman governors drove the people to revolt. The six seals on the scroll which the Lamb opened were prophecies of events in Palestine during the Jubilee and as each happened, so a seal was believed to have opened. The third seal was the great famine of 46–48 CE, prophesied by Agabus (Acts 11.28), whose enigmatic words were preserved (Rev. 6.6). The fifth was the martyrdom of James the Righteous who was murdered in the temple in 62 CE and buried where he fell,[19] and the sixth was Nero's persecution which followed the great fire of Rome in July 64 CE, the great tribulation (Rev. 7.14). *The seventh seal would bring the return of the heavenly high priest to complete the great atonement at the end of the tenth Jubilee which was, by that time, imminent.* In August 66 CE, the nationalists

gained entrance to the temple area and burned all records of debt,[20] the start of the Jubilee.

Jubilee fervour must have been a factor in Judaea in the first century CE. Zealot ideology was that of the ancient warrior priests, their great hero being Phineas who was zealous for his God and put to death those who broke the covenant laws (Num. 25.13). Phineas' violent action was described as atonement, and this was also part of the Zealot agenda. Above all they wanted their own land restored to its rightful owners; it was a Jubilee campaign.

How deeply the Christians were involved in these nationalist movements is hard to say; there is a strong suspicion that disciples with names like Simon the Cananean, i.e. Zealot (Mark 3.18 cf. Luke 6.15) or Judas Iscariot, or Peter, known as Simon Bar Jona (Matt. 16.17) when the *barjone* were the Zealots,[21] cannot have been unconnected with the nationalist movement.

The saints in the Book of Revelation were involved in struggles of the last days, but there was a strong economic element in their struggle. The beast was the antichrist, the antitype of the Messiah, and the mark of the beast, or, using the language of 11QMelch, the sign of those who belonged to Belial, was worn on the right hand and the forehead, a parody of phylacteries (Deut. 6.8). The followers of the beast were enemies within the Jewish people, who had betrayed something very precious, the economic structures of the covenant people. The Book of Revelation originated in Palestine and so was written in Hebrew or Aramaic. The present Greek text has *charagma* for the 'mark' of the beast but this also means the mark left by the bite of a snake. In Hebrew, this 'bite' would have been *nešek*, which is the word used for interest paid on a loan. It was forbidden for Jews to charge interest to fellow Jews (Exod. 22.25) and it seems that those who wore the mark of the beast had been involved in money lending at interest to exacerbate the plight of their people. The great harlot in Revelation 17 was Jerusalem, condemned to destruction not for her idolatry, as in former times, but because of her ill-gotten wealth. As the city burned in Revelation 18, the saints rejoiced but the merchants wept.

Contemporary sources show just how deep was the hatred against those who exploited the poor of Palestine. There was the Wicked Priest in Jerusalem who 'forsook God for the sake of riches ... heaping sinful iniquity upon himself' (1QpHab VIII). 'The last priests in Jerusalem shall amass money and wealth by plundering the people but in the last days their riches and their booty shall be delivered into the hands of the Kittim', i.e. the Romans (1QpHab IX). These same sources also show how literally they believed there would be divine intervention in their final struggle. The War Scroll describes the angels who would fight alongside them, how the presence of the Holy Ones would enable them to scorn the mighty. Josephus describes how the Zealot leaders refused

all Titus's offers of honourable surrender, because they were confident that the One who lived in their temple would come to help them. John of Gischala was confident that the city would never fall because it belonged to God. The fighting men later hurled insults at God for his delay in punishing their enemies.[22] He records another remarkable incident; when the Romans began to bombard the city with huge white stones, the defenders must have believed it was the supernatural hailstorm which announced a theophany, the return of the LORD. As the stones came over the walls, they shouted 'The Son is Coming'.[23]

There is insufficient evidence to say with confidence how closely the Parousia expectations of the early Church were bound up with the Jewish nationalism of the first century CE. They had Jubilee expectations in common, but the present form of the Gospels invites us to believe that Jesus spiritualized the Jubilee, interpreting release from debt and slavery as forgiveness of sins and release from the power of Satan. This, however, is exactly the interpretation in 11QMelch, which was quite clear about the events of the tenth Jubilee. A spiritual interpretation of Jubilee does not necessarily indicate a separate agenda from the nationalists. Jesus did warn that the blood of the prophets would be required of his generation (Luke 11.50), in other words, that the Day of Judgement would occur within the lifetime of his hearers. This explains the urgency of his words: 'The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the good news.'

3

ATONEMENT: THE RITE OF HEALING[1]

There has recently been a number of books on the Christian understanding of atonement. What has been fascinating for me is the extent to which these books do, or more often do not, use the Old Testament material on atonement as the basis for what they have to say. The New Testament speaks in a variety of ways about atonement, and this has become the centre of Christian dogmatics; but this 'atonement' is only loosely related to its Old Testament roots. Did the first Christians, then, radically alter what was understood by atonement, or was this radical alteration made by subsequent expositors of their ideas? The latter is more likely; in other words, the original model for New Testament theology has been lost.

George Steiner, in his book *The Death of Tragedy*, said this:

> When the artist must be the architect of his own mythology, time is against him. He cannot live long enough to impose his special vision and the symbols he has devised for it on the habits of language and the feelings of his society. Without an orthodox or public frame to support it, it does not take root in the common soil.[2]

The death of Jesus was interpreted immediately in terms of atonement, even though the first Christians cannot have been, to use Steiner's phrase, 'architects of their own mythology'. That they had been just this, however, is the unacknowledged presupposition of much of the debate. We are given no explanation as to how the two goats of the Day of Atonement found their fulfilment in events that were interpreted as the LORD himself coming to his people as their Redeemer and the renewer of the creation.

In his book *The Christian Understanding of Atonement*, Dillistone made this observation: 'From the New Testament there come hints, suggestions, even daring affirmations of a comprehensive cosmic reconciliation.' He doubted that this was derived from Hebrew thought, but continued: 'It was not until early Christian witnesses found themselves confronted by pagan systems in which a full theory of cosmic redemption played a prominent part that the effect of the work of Christ upon the cosmos at large began to receive serious consideration.'[3] I have reason to believe that this 'cosmic' theory of atonement does not originate in paganism but in the Jerusalem temple. Failure to understand this cult has led to some curious distortions in reading the New Testament, even by Old Testament scholars. Thus B. S. Childs, in his volume on Exodus, could say of the tabernacle: '[the letter to the] Hebrews offers a major reinterpretation of the Levitical system in the Christian gospel'. But does it? Elsewhere he seems not to

recognize the importance of atonement; in his new book *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, a work of over five hundred pages, only four deal with atonement in the Old Testament.[4]

I want to suggest in this chapter that there was no influx of paganism into the concept of atonement as that was expressed and assumed in the New Testament, and no major reinterpretation. *What was assumed by the New Testament writers was a traditional understanding of the temple rituals and myths of atonement.* When the rituals had ceased and the myths were no longer recognized for what they really were, the key to understanding the imagery of atonement was lost. It is recognized that certain concepts in the New Testament, such as covenant, righteousness, justification and grace, must have been related to the central theme of atonement, but the overall pattern, it seems, has been lost.

Atonement translates the Hebrew *kpr*, but the meaning of *kpr* in a ritual context is not known. Investigations have uncovered only what actions were used in the rites of atonement, not what that action was believed to effect. The possibilities for its meaning are 'cover' or 'smear' or 'wipe',[5] but these reveal no more than the exact meaning of 'breaking bread' reveals about the Christian Eucharist. What these actions were believed to effect in ritual has to be deduced by other means. To understand atonement we have to understand what the faith community believed was happening when the priests smeared and sprinkled blood, and when the high priest took blood into the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement and then brought it out again to smear and sprinkle around the holy places.

First, the rite of the Day of Atonement was ancient. Under the influence of T. K. Cheyne,[6] it was fashionable for a long time to say that the Day of Atonement rituals were a late insertion into the Levitical legislation. He asserted, as one did in those days, that such a ritual showed the low spiritual state to which the Jews had sunk in the inter-testamental period! Opinion has shifted; the rite is now thought to be of ancient origin. Furthermore, according to *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, it was 'the keystone of the sacrificial system of post-exilic Judaism'. In other words, it could be the link between the pre- and post-exilic cults, and the extent of our ignorance about the Day of Atonement is the extent of our ignorance about Israel's religion.[7] Much that is said, or not said, on this subject reveals unacknowledged presuppositions (e.g. that atonement counted for less than one per cent of Israel's theology!), but when these are challenged, interesting possibilities emerge.

What, for example, is the significance of Azazel, a name which appears in many forms? I quote again from *The Jewish Encyclopaedia:* 'Azazel enjoys the distinction of being the most mysterious extra-human character in sacred literature.'[8] The best clue to his identity comes from the Talmud; the context is a discussion of Azazel, which by

that time was generally assumed to refer to the rocky place to which the goat was sent.

> Our rabbis taught: 'Azazel ... it should be hard and rough ...' Another taught: 'Azazel the hardest of the mountains, thus also does it say: And the mighty *('ele)* of the land he took away.' Only one of the rabbis had a different view; he said that Azazel was a fallen angel and not the name of a place: 'The school of R. Ishmael taught: Azazel because it obtains atonement for the affair of Uza and Aza'el.' (*b. Yoma* 67b)

The affair of Asael and its consequences is the major theme of *1 Enoch*; how these fallen angels *came to be associated* with the Day of Atonement has been variously explained. Note the assumption; they cannot have been part of the original but must have been added. Hanson and Nickelsburg aired this issue in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* in 1977. There are two names of the leader of the fallen angels in *1 Enoch*: Asael and Semiḥazah, and two versions of what happened. Hanson suggested that the Asael material in *1 Enoch* had been joined to the Semiḥazah story by stages: the judgement of Semiḥazah was amplified by atonement motifs from Leviticus 16 because the Azazel of Leviticus and the Asael of *1 Enoch* had similar names. Nickelsburg disagreed and thought the Semiḥazah material had been amplified by the Prometheus myth. I shall return to his observations at a later stage.[9]

In the Enochic account of the fallen angels, the Great Holy One comes forth from his dwelling place to bring the Judgement (*1 En.*1). This is very similar to temple traditions such as Micah 1.3: 'The Lord is coming forth out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth'; or Deuteronomy 33.2 where the LORD 'dawns' with ten thousand of his holy ones and becomes King; or Psalm 73.17 where the judgement of the wicked is perceived in the sanctuary. In the Enochic tradition, the sin of the fallen angels results in the breaking of the 'cosmic' covenant and the corruption of the earth. It is perhaps significant that the rabbi who linked Azazel to the fallen angels was Ishmael, the rabbi credited with knowledge of secret temple traditions which surfaced in the Merkavah texts.[10] It is not impossible that the banishing of Azazel in the atonement ritual came from the same stratum of temple tradition as did the Merkavah texts, namely that which had kept touch with the traditions from the time of the monarchy. The fallen angels would then have been associated with the Day of Atonement from the beginning.

Second, we must note how the rite of atonement functioned in the Pentateuch. The action of *kpr* protected against the plague of divine wrath, an outbreak of destruction, which signalled the breakdown of the created order. Thus the Levites were installed to *kpr* in case anyone should come too near the sanctuary and thus risk plague (Num. 8.19). After the revolt of Korah, those who continued to support the rebels were threatened with wrath from the LORD. A plague began but was

stopped by Aaron with his incense. He stood physically between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped (Num. 16.47, English numbering). The best-known example is that of Phineas, who killed the apostate Israelite and his Midianite wife (Num. 25.10–13). He made 'atonement'. As a result, he was given the covenant of priesthood, the covenant of peace. The significant point here, apart from atonement stopping the plague again, is that atonement was the ritual associated with covenant; here the covenant of peace, the covenant of the priesthood of eternity, elsewhere called the covenant of eternity or, more recently, the 'cosmic covenant'.[11] Now covenant is the first of the concepts associated with atonement in the New Testament. The covenant in question must have been this priestly covenant, the eternal covenant.

The eternal covenant was the system of bonds which established and maintained the creation, ordering and binding the forces of chaos. There are several places in the Old Testament where this older view of the creation is implied at, for example, Job 38.8–10: 'Who shut in the sea with doors and prescribed bounds for it?'; or Jeremiah 5.22: 'I placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, the eternal rule which it may not transgress'; or Psalm 104.9: 'You set a boundary that [the waters] should not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.'[12] The eternal covenant is more prominent in the non-canonical texts such as *1 Enoch*, which describes how this covenant was broken and then restored. The restoration of the covenant is described in terms we recognize as the Day of the LORD, the Judgement, as we shall see later. When the statutes and laws of the eternal covenant were broken, the fabric of the creation began to collapse and chaos set in. Total disregard for the statutes resulted in the return to chaos described in, for example, Isaiah 24.5: 'The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.' Or Jeremiah 4.23: 'I looked to the earth and lo it was waste and void; and to the heavens and they had no light.' Jeremiah sees the world returned to its pre-creation state. When the covenant was restored, the creation was renewed and returned to its original condition of *šalom* and *ṣedaqah/dikaiosune*,[13] the second of the concepts associated with atonement in the New Testament.

I should like to quote here from a recent article by Mary Douglas in *Jewish Studies Quarterly*:

> Terms derived from cleansing, washing and purging have imported into biblical scholarship distractions which have occluded Leviticus' own very specific and clear description of atonement. According to the illustrative cases from Leviticus, to atone means to cover or recover, cover again, to repair a hole, cure a sickness, mend a rift, make good a torn or broken covering. As a noun, what is translated atonement, expiation or purgation means integument made good; conversely, the examples in the

book indicate that defilement means integument torn. Atonement does not mean covering a sin so as to hide it from the sight of God; it means making good an outer layer which has rotted or been pierced.[14]

This sounds very like the cosmic covenant with its system of bonds maintaining the created order, broken by sin and repaired by 'atonement'.

Third, we must consider the temple, the place where atonement was effected. The temple was the meeting place of heaven and earth, time and eternity. The holy of holies, the place of the throne of the Lord, was simultaneously heaven and earth. 'The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven' (Ps. 11.4) wrote the Psalmist, and we must believe what he said. 'A glorious throne set on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary' are the words of Jeremiah (Jer. 17.12). The traditions say that it was an exact replica of the service of heaven. Moses had been given the plan of the tabernacle, not just its construction, but the details for the vestments, the incense, the oils, the priesthood and the sacrifices (Exod. 25–30). Or David had given Solomon a comprehensive plan of the temple which he had received from the Lord (1 Chron. 28.11–19, cf. 11QT), the furnishings of the temple were those of heaven; Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord (1 Chron. 29.23). That is what the Chronicler wrote and presumably that is what he and the Jerusalem temple personnel of his time believed. Such a belief can be deduced from the Qumran texts such as the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* or the Blessings: 'May you be as an angel of the presence in the abode of holiness to the glory of the God of [hosts]' (1QSb IV).

The implication of this belief must be that what was performed in the temple 'was' the service of heaven and so the rite of atonement must have had a heavenly counterpart, for want of better words. The association of atonement and covenant of creation in the texts cited above suggests that atonement rituals were creation and covenant rituals. Further, the role of the priests is significant. According to the Qumran texts they were angels, and there is enough evidence elsewhere to suggest that the high priest was the LORD. The tradition recorded in Deuteronomy 32.8 (using the Qumran and LXX reading rather than the MT) is that the Lord was the first among the sons of El Elyon, in other words, the chief of the angels.[15] His counterpart, the high priest, would have been the first among the priests. Also, the high priest wore the sacred name *yhwh* on his forehead when he was officiating in the temple. This is obscured in the canonical texts, but is quite clear in Philo, who says the high priest wore a golden plate showing a name that only the purified may speak, and 'that Name has four letters'; and in the *Letter of Aristeas*, which reads 'On the front of the hallowed diadem ... in holy letters on a leaf of gold [the high priest] wears the Name of God'.[16]

That creation rituals should be performed by the LORD is hardly surprising. If the LORD had bound the creation at the beginning with the great covenant which kept the forces of chaos in their place and gave security to his people, any covenant renewal ceremony must have involved the LORD performing these acts. Atonement rituals repaired the damage to the created order caused by sin through which 'wrath' could have broken in with such disastrous consequences. Again *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* makes an interesting observation: 'But while, according to Scripture, the high priest made atonement, *tradition transferred the atoning power to God.*'[17]

Fourth, we must consider the remainder of the temple. The *d'bir*, the holy of holies, was the place of the LORD's throne, but the *hekal*, the great hall of the temple, was the Garden of Eden. The decorations of the temple were those of Eden (trees, pomegranates, lilies, cherubim), the seven-branched lamp was described in later tradition as the tree of life, a bronze serpent was removed from the temple by Hezekiah, and Ezekiel saw the river of life flowing from the temple.[18] Just as the *d'bir* represented heaven ('represented' is a concession to our way of thinking), so the *hekal* represented the completed creation. This again suggests that the rituals of the temple were creation rituals.

Fifth, we note that in temple atonement symbolism, blood was life. Texts which deal with cultic matters are notoriously difficult to translate; the RSV gives Leviticus 17.11 as: 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life.' The life of the flesh is in the blood, and that blood on the altar serves to *kpr 'al* the lives of the people.

We come now to the sixth and last preliminary observation. When the action *kpr* was performed, the object was a place or a thing not a person. Often there was an impersonal form: 'It shall be *kpr* for you'. On the Day of Atonement according to Leviticus 16.14–16, the high priest sprinkled the blood on the *kapporet* ('the mercy seat') and in front of it, to *kpr 'al* the holy of holies, then he performed a similar ritual for the tent of meeting and then again for the altar. In the Mishnah these actions are prescribed for the holy of holies, the curtain, the incense altar in the temple, and the altar of sacrifice outside. Places were sprinkled to cleanse, consecrate and *kpr* them from all the uncleannesses of the people (*m. Yoma* 5.4–5). *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* again: 'In the prophetic language, however, the original idea of the atonement offering had become lost, and instead of the offended person (God) *the offence or guilt became the object of atonement.*'[19] The assumption here is that the prophets altered the original meaning of atonement. Milgrom says something similar:

> Outside the cult *kipper* undergoes a vast change which is immediately apparent from its new grammar and syntax. Whereas in rituals the subject of *kipper* is usually a priest and

the direct object is a contaminated thing, in non-ritual literature, the subject is usually the deity and the direct object is sin (Isa. 6.7; Jer. 18.23; Ezek. 16.63; Pss 65.4; 78.38; 79.9).[20]

Actually, this represents no rupture. This is very important; the ritual texts describe the actions done by the priests, whilst the non-ritual texts give the meaning of those actions. A priest smearing blood in the temple 'was' God removing sin.[21]

These six are the bases for any investigation of atonement: first, that it could be illuminated by the *Enoch* texts; second, that atonement was associated with the eternal covenant; third, that the temple service was the service of heaven; fourth, that the temple represented the entire system of heaven and earth; fifth that blood was life; and sixth, that it was places within the temple complex that were 'repaired' to remove the effects of sin.

The result of *kpr* was that the 'iniquity' was *naśa'* and here there is another problem with the meaning of the Hebrew word. The literal meaning of *naśa'* is 'bear' or 'carry' but in certain contexts it seems more appropriate to translate it by 'forgive'. There are cases when a person is said to 'bear' his own guilt when he has deliberately broken a law (e.g. Lev. 19.8). The priests are said to 'bear' the guilt of the sinner after they have performed the atonement ritual for inadvertent offences (e.g. Lev. 10.17), and yet the LORD, with the same verb, is said to 'forgive'. 'Who', asked Micah, 'is a God like you bearing, i.e. forgiving sin?' (Mic. 7.18). Job asked (again, reading literally): 'Why do you not bear my transgression and cause my guilt to pass away?' (Job 7.21). There are many examples. What emerges is that 'carrying' iniquity was the role of the priests, of the LORD and of the scapegoat. If the temple rituals were the rituals of heaven and the LORD was part of the rituals, it is unlikely that a distinction would have been made between the role of the LORD 'forgiving' and the high priest 'bearing' the iniquities. We then have to ask what aspect of the ritual could have depicted this 'bearing' of sins, and the obvious answer is the scapegoat.

The priests were enabled to 'bear' the guilt in two ways: ordinary priests ate the flesh of the sin offering whose blood had been used for *kpr*. They were then said to 'bear' the iniquity (Lev. 10.17). The implication is that by eating the flesh of the victim the priests absorbed the impurity and made it possible for the offender to be reintegrated into the community. If the offerings were not eaten by the priests, then the people continued to bear their own guilt (Lev. 22.15, but this text is obscure). The high priest himself 'bears' the iniquity of gifts consecrated to the LORD and thus they become acceptable (Exod. 28. 38), but to do so, the high priest has to wear on his forehead the sacred Name. This seems to suggest that when the high priest functioned as the LORD, he absorbed the impurities of others. This understanding of atonement is

well illustrated by Ps. 32.1, which, whilst not using *kpr*, says exactly what was done in that ritual. Again, rendering literally: 'Blessed is the man borne in respect of his transgressions and covered in respect of his sin.' This is quoted in Rom. 4. 7–8. Is it possible, then, that underlying the metaphorical use of *naśa'* there lies the memory of an older ritual when the LORD (or his representative, the high priest) literally bore away the guilt, sin, and transgression of his people, which would otherwise have laid them open to the dangers of sickness, enemies, plague and other consequences of the broken covenant?[22]

I return now to Mary Douglas's article: she notes that what is unusual about biblical purity laws is that they do not serve to set members of the congregation apart from one another. The rituals are for keeping the community together:

> The more closely we look at the biblical rules of sacred contagion, the more strongly marked appears the difference between the Bible system and other systems of contagious impurity. We cannot avoid asking why the priests defined laws of purity that did not make parts of the congregation separate from or defined as higher or lower than the rest.[23]

This implies that the role of the priest/the LORD was to hold his people together; this would have been done by the priest absorbing the effects of sin and repairing the covenant bonds.

The blood ritual was performed in the temple. For some offences the ritual was performed by the priests in the outer part of the temple, but for the transgressions (*p^{e}ša'im*, literally rebellions), the high priest took the blood into the holy of holies and then brought it out again. Jacob Milgrom has compared the long-distance effect of sin upon the temple to the portrait of Dorian Grey;[24] sins committed elsewhere had the effect of polluting the temple. Whilst I think that Milgrom is broadly correct in this comparison, there is room for refinement. If the temple represented, 'was', the creation, then when any offence was committed, the cosmic covenant was breached and the people were exposed to danger. It was not simply the case that the temple was polluted by sinners, as they themselves would not have been allowed into those parts of the temple complex which their sins had damaged. It was the land or the creation which had been polluted, and the temple 'was' the creation. Thus Isaiah 24.5: 'The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.' The damage was restored by ritual in the temple. 'Life', i.e. blood, was applied to the damaged parts and the impurity was absorbed, 'borne' by the priest who performed the *kpr*. It was the ritual of restoration and healing.

For the great atonement a greater ritual was demanded. The high priest took blood into the holy of holies and when he emerged, he smeared and sprinkled it on various parts of the temple. Then he placed

both his hands on the scapegoat, loaded the animal with the sins of the people, and sent it into the desert. Translated into temple terms this means: The LORD emerged from heaven carrying life, which was given to all parts of the created order as the effects of sin were absorbed and wounds healed. The LORD then transferred the sins of the people, which he had been carrying, onto the goat, which was then driven away carrying the sins. The question which must be asked is: 'Whose life did the LORD use to restore the creation?' or 'Whose life did the blood represent?'

Before that question can be answered, we need to look for the 'myth' which corresponded to the high priest coming out of the holy of holies carrying blood. I suggest that the Day of the LORD texts belong with the Day of Atonement ritual. They describe how the LORD came forth from his dwelling, i.e. from the holy of holies. The Qumran Hebrew of Deuteronomy 32.43 is very similar to the LXX (but different from the MT) and reads:

> Heavens praise his people, all *'elohim* bow down to him
> For he avenges the blood of his sons and takes vengeance on his adversaries
> And requites those who hate him and *kpr* the land of his people.

The one who performs the *kpr* of the land here in this text is the LORD. Further, the *Assumption of Moses*,[25] which is widely held to be an expansion of this part of Deuteronomy, has significant additional detail where it corresponds to Deuteronomy 32.43:

> Then his kingdom will appear throughout his whole creation
> Then the evil one will have an end.
> Sorrow will be led away with him[26]
> Then will be filled the hands[27] of the angel who is in the highest place appointed
> He will at once avenge them of their enemies.
> The heavenly one will go forth from his kingly throne
> He will go forth from his holy habitation with indignation and wrath on behalf of his sons. (*Ass. Mos.* 10)

The *Assumption*, dated towards the end of the second temple period, shows how this text was then understood; the figure emerging from his holy habitation was an angel priest, coming to bring judgement and establish his kingdom. The evil one was led away.

The Qumran Melchizedek text (11QMelch) provides a third piece of evidence. It describes the Day of Judgement which is also the Day of Atonement at the end of the tenth Jubilee. A heavenly deliverer, Melchizedek, the great high priest and leader of the sons of heaven,

comes to deliver the sons of light from the hand of Satan. The accompanying texts are Psalm 82.1, where the *'elohim* are judged, Isaiah 52.7, where the messenger brings peace and proclaims the reign of God in Zion, Daniel 9.25, where the anointed prince comes to Jerusalem, and Isaiah 61.2–3, the day of the LORD's favour and vengeance. The text describes judgement on the fallen angels as the people are rescued from Satan, peace for Jerusalem, the advent of the Messiah and the Day of the LORD. These three extracts, from Deuteronomy, the *Assumption of Moses* and the Melchizedek text, are mutually consistent, and show that the heavenly high priest was the LORD who came from his holy place on the Day of Atonement in order to save his people from the power of the fallen angels, to punish their enemies and to *kpr* the land. I suggest, in the light of this, that *kpr* has to mean restore, recreate or heal.

The most detailed description of the Day of the LORD (and indeed of the cosmic covenant) is found in *1 Enoch* (the Ethiopic Enoch). The text begins with the Great Holy One coming from his dwelling place to bring judgement on the fallen angels. You will recall the minority opinion of R. Ishmael that the Day of Atonement was necessitated by the fallen angels and their deeds. In *1 Enoch* their leader Asael is bound by the archangel Raphael (the healer!) and then imprisoned in the desert in a place called Dudael. The purpose of this judgement, we are told, is to give life to the earth. 'And he will proclaim life for the earth, that he is giving life to her' (*1 En.* 10.7).[28] This was the blood ritual, the life-giving ritual.

We now have to attend to some details in the ritual in the light of the underlying myth. First, there were two goats and, according to the Mishnah, they had to be identical (*m. Yoma* 6.1). Between them, they carried the ritual. This is important; the two goats were two aspects of one ritual and cannot be separated. This was known to the first Christians, who had no difficulty in comparing Jesus to both goats; he was both the sacrifice and the scapegoat.[29]

The two goats were distinguished by lot: one was 'for Azazel' and the other was 'for the LORD'. That is how we usually translate. The scapegoat was driven into the desert to a place whose name appears in a variety of forms.[30] Origen (*Celsus* 6.43), writing early in the third century CE, implies that the goat sent out into the desert was not 'for Azazel' but was called Azazel. This is quite clear in both the Greek and Latin texts; the evil one was identified with the snake in Eden and with the goat named Azazel sent out into the desert. Such an identification would be quite in accord with the system of counterparts which characterized temple ritual. The animal chosen was also appropriate; in Hebrew, the words 'goat' and 'demon' look identical (*śa'yr*).[31] The high priest would have put the sins of Israel onto Azazel before he was taken to the desert. If the one goat chosen 'was' Azazel, then the other must

have been the LORD. The construction in the Hebrew is identical, and the sequence in the ritual confirms this. The goat offered as the sin offering does not in fact take away the sin. Instead this is somehow collected by the high priest, presumably as he performs the atonement rite, 'carried' and then transferred from the high priest on to the head of the Azazel goat (Lev. 16.21).[32]

Nickelsburg drew very different conclusions. In summing up his disagreement with Hanson, he discussed first the names of the desert place to which the goat was sent, and then offered this decisive conclusion as to why Enoch cannot have been related to Leviticus 16:

> In Enoch all sin is written over Asael the demon. In the Targum (and the Bible) all of the people's sins are placed on the head of the goat (Lev. 16.21) ... In Enoch the demon is destroyed. In the Targum it is the goat that perishes (Lev. 16.22) ... On the basis of this comparison we must ask whether *1 Enoch* has been amplified by a Leviticus tradition which is represented by Targum Pseudo Jonathan. Indeed we shall ask, does *1 Enoch* reflect Leviticus 16 at all?

The evidence which Nickelsburg use as 'proof' that *1 Enoch* and Leviticus 16 were unrelated is in fact the most crucial evidence for understanding the ritual of atonement, namely that the goat 'was' the demon. Nickelsburg continued his disagreement thus:

> If [Hanson's proposed] reviser [of the Semiḥazah and Asael traditions to form *1 Enoch*] has used the Day of Atonement motif, he has made some radical revisions in his biblical tradition. 1. In the biblical text and the Targum, a ritual is prescribed which involves the sending out of a goat into the wilderness 'to Azazel' (a demon? That is already out there) in consequence of which atonement is effected. In *1 Enoch*, Asael, clearly a demon, is himself led out into the wilderness and buried there, in consequence of which the earth is healed. 2. Not only is Asael identified [in Hanson's thesis] with the Azazel in the wilderness, he is also identified with the goat which is led out to Azazel. He has all sin written over him and he is destroyed like the goat in the Targum ...

Such an identification of goat and demon was clearly impossible, and so he continued:

> Although [Hanson's proposed] reviser is dependent on Leviticus 16, he has used none of the specific atonement language of that chapter. Instead Raphael's action is derived from his name; he heals the earth ...
>
> In summary, if the reviser is dependent on Leviticus 16, he has changed the nature of the biblical tradition, he has confused the cast of characters, and he has failed to introduce the central concept of Leviticus 16, viz. atonement ... In view of these difficulties, a primary dependence on the Prometheus myth appears more tenable.[33]

Can we be so certain that an ancient author changed the nature of the tradition, confused the cast of characters and failed to understand the atonement when the tradition, the characters and the nature of atonement are the very things we are trying to discover?

When lesser offences were *kpr*, the priest 'carried' the sin by virtue of eating the flesh of the animal whose life had effected the *kpr*. He identified with it. For the great *kpr*, the blood/life of the goat 'as the LORD' was a substitute for the blood/life of the high priest (also the LORD), who thus carried the sin of the people himself as he performed the act of *kpr* throughout the temple/creation. Thus, having collected the sins, he it was who was able to transfer them onto the goat who 'carried' them (*ns'*, Lev. 16.22) and took them to the desert.[34] The role of the high priest, the LORD, was to remove the damaging effect of sin from the community and the creation, and thus to restore the bonds which held together the community and the creation. This is consistent with Mary Douglas's observation about the peculiarity of biblical purity laws; many of the rituals were for reintegration not expulsion.

I must now offer some corroborating evidence. First, from *1 Enoch* again, chapter 47, which is part of the first *Parable*. Each of the three *Parables* is a vision of the heavenly throne and the judgement, and it is easy enough to establish the identity of the central Man figure. He is called Son of Man (whatever that means), the Anointed One, and the Chosen One, and the simple process of matching phrases and descriptions shows that he was identical to Isaiah's enigmatic Servant. The scene in chapter 47 is this: the Man figure has ascended to the throne, as in Daniel 7; then we learn that the blood of the Righteous One has been brought up to the LORD of Spirits, together with the prayers of the righteous ones. Then the judgement begins. The Righteous One elsewhere in the *Parables* (*1 En.* 38.2; 53.6) is the Anointed One. M. Black suggests that the Righteous One whose blood was brought before the LORD could be a reference to Isaiah 53, where the Servant, who makes righteous, pours out his life as an *'ašam*.[35]

Second, we see that Isaiah 53 could have been inspired by the Day of Atonement ritual. A few points must suffice.

1. 'He shall startle many nations' (Isa. 52.15); *yazzeh*, the apparently untranslatable verb, means 'sprinkle' in the atonement ritual (Lev. 16.19). The Servant figure does not 'startle' many peoples; the original Hebrew says he 'sprinkles'.[36]
2. The Servant 'carries' the people's sicknesses or weaknesses (Isa. 53.4).
3. The Servant has been wounded for their transgressions. Wounded, *ḥll*, is a word which carries both the meanings required by Mary Douglas's theory of atonement, viz. to pierce or to defile.
4. 'Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole' (Isa. 53.5b) can also be translated 'The covenant bond of our peace was his responsibility'.[37] 'With his stripes, *ḥbrt*,[38] we are healed' would then become 'By his joining us together we are healed', forming a parallel to *mwsr*, covenant bond. The primary meaning of *ḥbr* is to unite, join together.

5. The Servant pours out his soul/life as a sin offering, *'šm* (Isa. 53.10). The *'šm* is, according to Milgrom, the sacrifice which redresses the *m'l*, which is either sacrilege against holy things or violation of the covenant.[39] The soul/life was in the blood of the sacrifice, hence it was poured out.

All this suggests that the Servant figure was modelled on the one who performed the atonement rites in the first temple. This figure appears in Enoch's *Parables* in his heavenly aspect as the Man, the Anointed, the Chosen One. In the ritual of the second temple, the figure became two goats: one bearing the sins away and the life/blood of the other being taken into the holy of holies where the ark, the throne, had been.[40]

Third, there is additional information about the scapegoat in the Mishnah; people pulled out the goat's hair as it was led away (*m. Yoma* 6.4). In the *Epistle of Barnabas*[41] there is a quotation from an unknown source about the scapegoat: 'Spit on it, all of you, thrust your goads into it, wreathe its head with scarlet wool and let it be driven into the desert' (*Barn.* 7). The goat suffered the fate of the Servant: 'I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard. I hid not my face from shame and spitting' (Isa. 50.6); and 'He was pierced for our transgressions' (Isa. 53.5). Barnabas continues: 'When they see him (Jesus) coming on the Day, they are going to be struck with terror at the manifest parallel between him and the goat.' The reference is to the future coming of the LORD to his people. This is another Servant motif; the recognition of who the Servant is.[42] Barnabas, too, associates the scapegoat with the Day of the LORD: 'They shall see him on that Day, clad to the ankles in his red woollen robe, and will say, "Is this not he whom we once crucified and mocked and pierced and spat upon?"' (*Barn.* 7).

To conclude. I must return to the question with which I began: what was the understanding of atonement which gave rise to the Christian claims about cosmic reconciliation, which Dillistone thought must have derived from pagan systems? What I have proposed would explain why the LORD himself was the atonement sacrifice.[43] The whole point of the argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews is that it was Jesus the high priest who took his own blood into the heavenly sanctuary and thereby became the mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 9.11–15). What I propose would explain the cosmic unity described in Ephesians 1.10: 'to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth . . .' and in Colossians 1.17, 20: 'In him all things hold together, . . . through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven . . .'. It would explain Matthew's use of the Servant text 'he took our infirmities and bore our diseases' in the context of healing miracles (Matt. 8.17). It would explain why a sermon in Acts refers to Jesus as the Righteous One and the Servant but also as the Author of Life (Acts

3.13–15). It would explain all the new life and new creation imagery in the New Testament. Above all it would explain the so-called kenotic hymn in Philippians 2.6–11; the self-emptying of the Servant would have been the symbolic life-giving, when the blood, the life, was poured out by the high priest on the Day of Atonement to heal and restore the creation.[44]

4

PAROUSIA AND LITURGY[1]

Although there are various possible translations of *Maranatha* (Our LORD comes, Our LORD has come), the fragments at the end of the Book of Revelation show that it was understood at that time to mean 'Come LORD'. The LORD himself assures his people that he is coming soon to bring the judgement (Rev. 22.7, 12, 20), and the prayer reflects this hope of his imminent return. The position of these fragments at the end of the Book of Revelation suggests that they were no longer central to the message of the book. In other words, *Maranatha* was being understood in another way.

The same prayer appears elsewhere as the closing lines of a letter, which give no indication of how it was understood (1 Cor. 16.22), but also at the close of an early eucharistic prayer, possibly the earliest known outside the New Testament, a very significant context (*Didache* 10). *This links the return of the LORD to the Eucharist.* Other lines of the prayer are ambiguous: 'Let this present world pass away', for example, could imply either a literal understanding of the LORD's return or the present transforming effect of the Eucharist. *Maranatha in the Eucharist, however, must be the original* epiklesis, *praying for the coming of the LORD.* The *Didache* prayer has no reference to the words of institution at the Last Supper and no Passover imagery. As implied in John's account of the Last Supper (John 13.1–20), Jesus is 'Thy Servant Jesus', and thanks are offered for the knowledge, faith and everlasting life made known through him. The bread and wine are spiritual meat and drink (cf. John 6.25–58), which cause the Name to dwell in the hearts of those who have been fed. This could indicate that John's understanding of the Eucharist was the formative influence here, and that it was his new understanding of *Maranatha* which led to its transformation into the eucharistic *epiklesis*.

Passover or Day of Atonement?

Despite the apparently clear accounts of the Eucharist in the Synoptic Gospels, there are many problems as to its true origin and significance. *The Passover is the least likely context as this was the one sacrifice not offered by a priest* (*m. Yoma* 5.6), and the earliest tradition remembers Jesus as the Great High Priest.[2] The words of institution known to the evangelists (Matt. 26.26–28; Mark 14.22–24; Luke 22.14–20) and Paul (1 Cor. 11.23–26) indicate as their context the priestly sacrifice of the Eternal Covenant, in other words, the Day of Atonement. The position of the Christian altar in a church building, beyond the boundary between

a

earth and heaven, shows that it derived from the *kapporet* in the holy of holies, the place where the Atonement blood was offered.

Even though Paul knew Christ as the paschal lamb (1 Cor. 5.7), he had also been taught that his death was 'for our sins in accordance with the scriptures' (1 Cor. 15.3). This indicates that the earliest interpretation of the death of Jesus was based on the fourth Servant Song, which, in the form known at Qumran, depicts a suffering Messiah figure who bears the sins of others (1QIsa[a] 52.13–53.12). He was the High Priest who sprinkled the atonement blood (Isa. 52.15) and *was himself the sacrifice* (Isa. 53.10). A similar expectation is found in Peter's temple sermon; the Servant, the Author of life, was about to return from heaven bringing 'times of refreshing' (Acts 3.13–21). Again, these texts indicate that the original understanding of the death of Jesus was the renewal of the eternal covenant on the Day of Atonement.

The original context of the Eucharist should be sought in the Day of Atonement, when the High Priest took the blood into the holy of holies and then returned to complete the rite of atonement and renewal. At first the Christians had prayed for the literal return of the LORD to bring judgement on their enemies and to establish the Kingdom. Their hopes for the history of their times were based on the ancient ritual pattern of the Day of Atonement. Jesus, the great high priest, had sacrificed himself as the atonement offering of the tenth Jubilee, had passed into heaven, the true holy of holies, and would emerge again to complete the atonement. When this did not literally happen, John learned in his vision of the returning high priest (Rev. 10) that the expectations of the Church should return to the temple liturgy whence they had come. In the original temple ritual, the anointed high priest, even though he 'was' the LORD, had taken into the holy of holies the blood of a goat which represented his own life-blood. As he emerged, he sprinkled 'his' blood, i.e. he gave his life, to cleanse and consecrate the creation. This renewed on earth the kingdom of the LORD's anointed. Hence 'Thy Kingdom come.'

The Messiah, both high priest and victim, was the theme of the Eucharist as it was of the Day of Atonement. Dix concluded:

> From the days of Clement of Rome in the first century, for whom our LORD is 'the High-priest of our offerings' Who is 'in the heights of the heavens' (1 Clem. 6) it can be said with truth that this doctrine of the offering of the earthly Eucharist by the heavenly Priest at the heavenly altar is to all intents and purposes the only conception of the eucharistic sacrifice which is known anywhere in the church ... there is no pre-Nicene author Eastern or Western whose eucharistic doctrine is at all fully stated who does not regard the offering and consecration of the Eucharist as the present action of the LORD Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity.[3]

Interpreting the Eucharist as the Day of Atonement offering, Origen wrote: 'You who came to Christ the true high priest, who made

atonement for you ... do not hold fast to the blood of the flesh. Learn rather the blood of the Word and hear him saying to you "This is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." He who is inspired by the mysteries knows both the flesh and the blood of the Word of God' (*On Leviticus* 9.10). Jerome, commenting on Zephaniah 3, wrote of 'the priests who pray at the Eucharist for the coming of the LORD'. He too went on to link the day of the LORD's coming to the Day of Atonement, and 'wait for me, for the day when I rise' (RSV, Zeph. 3.8) was read as 'Wait for me on the day of my resurrection'. This association of the two advents of the LORD with the Day of Atonement is found as early as the *Letter of Barnabas*, a Levite. As in Jerome, the earthly life of Jesus is compared to the role of the scapegoat who bore the sins, 'but the point of there being two similar goats is that when they see him coming on the Day, they are going to be struck with terror at the manifest parallel between him and the goat' (*Barn.* 7). The implication is that the blood of the goat being brought from the holy of holies was believed from the very earliest period to prefigure the Parousia, and that the association of the Eucharist and the Day of Atonement was well known. Justin in the mid-second century linked the sacrificed goat to the second coming (*Trypho* 40), and Cyril of Alexandria wrote some two centuries later: 'We must perceive the Immanuel in the slaughtered goat ... the two goats illustrate the mystery' (*Letter* 41).

In the Eucharist, the bishop or priest 'was' the high priest and therefore the LORD (e.g. Ignatius, *Magn.* 6: 'Let the bishop preside in the place of God'). He took into the holy of holies the bread and wine of the new bloodless sacrifice which became the body and blood of the LORD; this effected the atonement and renewal of the creation, and thus established on earth the expected Kingdom. Hence the eschatological emphasis of the earliest Eucharists. Dix again: 'The Eucharist is the contact of time with the eternal fact of the kingdom of God through Jesus. In it the church within time continually, as it were, enters into its own eternal being in that Kingdom.'[4] In other words, it was the ancient high priestly tradition of entering the holy of holies beyond time and matter, the place of the heavenly throne. A fragment of this temple belief in the eternal present of events which humans have experienced as history, is to be found in the writings of the Deuteronomists who did so much to suppress the mystical elements of the ancient cult. The rebellious generation who had been at Sinai were told they would not live to enter the promised land (Num. 14.26–35); nevertheless, Moses reminded their children: 'Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant but with us who are all of us here alive this day' (Deut. 5.3).

Had the original understanding of the Eucharist derived from the Passover, we should have expected the Exodus imagery of liberation

from slavery and becoming the chosen people. Instead, the expected benefits of the Eucharist were those of the Day of Atonement. Early evidence drawn from a variety of sources is consistent in this respect. Bishop Sarapion's Prayer Book, for example, used in Egypt in the middle of the fourth century, speaks of 'the medicine of life to heal every sickness and not for condemnation', i.e. of the Eucharist bringing judgement and renewal, which are the twin aspects of atonement. He prayed for angels to come and destroy the evil one, and for the establishment of the Church, i.e. for the banishing of Azazel and the establishing of the Kingdom. He prayed that the congregation would be made 'living men'[5], able to speak of the unspeakable mysteries. 'Make us wise by the participation of the body and the blood.' This is the high priestly tradition of the temple, and the 'living men' are the first-resurrected, the kingdom of priests reigning on earth after the evil one has been bound (Rev. 20.6). The *Liturgy of John Chrysostom* prays that the holy mysteries may bring remission of sins and forgiveness of transgressions, the gift of the Spirit, access to the LORD and a place in the Kingdom, healing of soul and body, not judgement and condemnation. Even earlier, the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* had prayed for enlightenment, and hopes for remission of sins, pardon of offences, hope of resurrection and new life in the Kingdom, and the *Liturgy of James* had prayed for peace and salvation, for forgiveness and protection from enemies. *All these themes derive from the covenant renewal of the Day of Atonement.*

There is a striking similarity between these prayers and the Qumran Hymns, and it would be easy to imagine the singer of the Hymns as the priest who had offered the eucharistic prayers. The singer knows the mysteries and has been purified from sin (1QH IX, formerly I and XII, formerly IV). He is one of the angels in the holy of holies (1QH XIV, formerly VI), he is strengthened by the Spirit (1QH XV, formerly VII), he has experienced light and healing (1QH XVII, formerly IX), he has been purified and become one of the holy ones, been resurrected and given understanding, he has stood in the assembly of the living, those with knowledge (1QH XIX, formerly XI). A creature of dust, he has been saved from the judgement, entered into the Covenant and stands in the eternal place illumined by perfect light (1QH XXI, formerly XVIII).

A recurring theme of the liturgies is that of fear and awe. A homily on the mysteries attributed to Narsai (*Homily* XVII A, late fifth century) speaks of 'the dread mysteries ... let everyone be in fear and dread as they are performed ... the hour of trembling and great fear'. As the Spirit is summoned to the bread and wine, 'the priest worships with quaking and fear and harrowing dread'. The people stand in fear as the Spirit descends. In the mid-fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem speaks of the 'most awful hour' when the priest begins the consecration and of

'the most awful sacrifice' (*Catecheses* 23.4,9). John Chrysostom has similar words to describe the coming of the Spirit (*On Priesthood* 6.4.34–36), and the people are commanded in the liturgy 'to stand in fear'. Perhaps the oldest example of all is the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, which speaks of 'the great, fearful, holy, life-giving, divine mystery', before which the people stand in silence and awe. The priest prays as did Isaiah (Isa. 6.5): 'Woe is me ... for mine eyes have seen the LORD of Hosts', and, in the manner of Moses in the tabernacle (Exod. 25.22): 'How dreadful is this place, for this day I have seen the LORD face to face ...'

Again, the setting is the holy of holies and the imagery drawn from the Day of Atonement. The earliest biblical account warns Aaron only to enter the holy of holies once a year, after elaborate preparation, on the Day of Atonement. The LORD warns that he will appear in the cloud upon the *kapporet*, and Aaron might die (Lev. 16.2). The Mishnah records the fear of the high priest as he entered the holy of holies: he spent as little time as possible in the holy place (*m. Yoma* 5.1), and at the end of the ritual 'he made a feast for his friends because he had come safely out of the holy of holies' (*m. Yoma* 7.4). When the Glory of the LORD came to the desert tabernacle, Moses was not able to enter (Exod. 40.35) and when the Glory came to the temple, the priests were not able to continue their ministrations there (1 Kgs 8.10–11). The very purpose of the tabernacle was to provide a place where the LORD could dwell in the midst of his people (Exod. 25.8), and if this holy place was not pure, the LORD departed (Ezek. 8–11). John described the incarnation as the Glory dwelling on earth, the Word made flesh (John 1.14).

Theurgy and Apotheosis

Several passages in the Merkavah texts have suggested to scholars that drawing down the LORD into the temple was a major element of the temple service. 'The temple and the service performed there were thought of as able to attract the Shekinah [the presence of the LORD] ... we can seriously consider the possibility that temple service was conceived as inducing the presence of the Shekinah in the holy of holies.'[6] The Hebrew Scriptures show that the LORD had been expected to appear in his temple (Num. 6.23–26, Isa. 64.1, Mal. 3.1), enthroned between the heavenly beings (Isa. 6.1–5), or to speak from above the cherubim of the *kapporet* (Exod. 25.22). The psalmist prayed that the Shepherd of Israel, enthroned upon the cherubim, would shine forth and come to save his people (Ps. 80.1–2, 3, 7, 19), that he would shine on his servant (Ps. 119.135). The psalmist also prayed for the LORD *to arise* and come to help his people (e.g. Pss 3.7; 7.6; 68.1), and he was certain that the LORD would appear (Ps. 102.16). The Levites

were appointed to serve before the ark, to invoke, to thank and the praise the LORD, the God of Israel (1 Chron. 16.4), and there may have been a double meaning to the familiar cry 'hallelujah', since the first meaning of *hll* is 'shine'. Was the cry 'Make the LORD shine', cause his presence to shine forth, as the psalmist had prayed?

The theurgical practices of pagan mysteries in the early years of Christianity are relatively well known. The Chaldean Oracles describe how to make an image of the goddess Hecate and how to draw her down into it. Certain words, materials and objects (*symbols*) were believed to have a special affinity with a particular deity. 'The objects became receptacles of the gods because they had an intimate relationship with them and bore their signatures (*sunthemata*) in the manifest world.'[7] The gods gave instructions how the rites were to be performed and the ritual of invoking the deity was *theourgia* or *hierourgia*, divine or sacred work. 'The body of the theurgist became the vehicle through which the gods appeared in the physical world and through which he received their communion.'[8] The theurgic acts were believed to unite the soul to the will and activity of the deity, but not to effect complete union. It was believed that the divine order was impressed on the world. The symbols of theurgy functioned in a manner similar to Plato's forms in that both revealed the divine order. Plato had taught that the Demiurge completed the moulding of the world after the nature of the model (*Timaeus* 39e). He too had been moulded after the nature of the model (Gen. 1.27).

Now this correspondence of heaven and earth is familiar from the temple and its rites, and it was far older than Plato. There is much in the *Timaeus*, for example, which seems to be dependent on the teachings of the Jerusalem priesthood of the first temple. The high priest, too, 'was' the LORD on earth when he wore the sacred seal which enabled him to 'bear' the sins of the people (Exod. 28.36–38). It has also been suggested that much of the Syrian Iamblichus' theurgy, written early in the fourth century CE, derived directly from the practice of the Jewish temple mystics. Even his Semitic name invites speculation, deriving as it does from 'the LORD is King'.[9]

Dionysius used the language of theurgy when he described the Christian mysteries in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. The bread and wine were the *symbols* of Christ (437CD) whose original divine work had been to become a man. The bishop repeats the sacred work with the sacred symbols: 'He uncovers the veiled gifts ... he shows how Christ emerged from the hiddenness of his divinity to take on human form' (444C).

The mystery at the very heart of the first temple has been lost, but some texts invite speculation. When Solomon was enthroned as king *he became the LORD,* although the Chronicler does not explain the process (1 Chron. 29.20–23). Since the *kapporet* was the throne of the LORD,

there must have been some link between the enthronement of the human king as the LORD and his being set on the place where the LORD used to appear. Origen implies that in the Day of Atonement ritual, the sacrificed goat was the LORD, the king (*Celsus* 6.43, PG 11. 1364). The blood of this goat was sprinkled first on the 'throne' and then brought out from the holy of holies to effect the atonement by cleansing and healing the creation. In other words, the blood 'carried' the power of the divine life. In the bloodless sacrifice of the Christians, the wine was substituted for the blood of the goat (cf. Heb. 9.12) , but the same process was believed to take place. The Christian altar, as we shall see, derived from the *kapporet* in the holy of holies, the place where the atonement blood was transformed and the LORD was present.

The royal psalms suggest that when the king entered the holy of holies he was 'born' in the glory of the holy ones and became the Melchizedek priest, the LORD (Ps. 110). He was raised up, that is, resurrected to the heavenly life (Ps. 89.19; Heb. 7.15–17). This must have been the moment when he became king and was declared to be the Son (Ps. 2.7). Praying for the presence of the LORD in the holy of holies and in the person of the royal high priest at his inauguration, must have been the original context of the *Maranatha* prayer. Since, as the writer to the Hebrews knew, the high priest offered himself as the atonement sacrifice but was represented by the blood of the goat, the LORD must also have been invoked at every atonement sacrifice when the life of the royal high priest was represented by the blood of the goat. The first Christians, believing that they were seeing the ancient liturgy fulfilled in history, used the *Maranatha* prayer initially to pray for the Parousia in their own lifetime. After John's vision of the angel in the cloud, however, the prayer returned to its original setting as they prayed for the LORD to come to the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

The Epiklesis

When the Day of Atonement is recognized as the original context of the Eucharist, other elements in the tradition fall into place. The *epiklesis* derived from the *Maranatha* prayer. The earliest forms do keep the word 'come' and are addressed to the Second Person whereas later forms are prayers to the First Person to 'send'. Serapion's *epiklesis* preserves the older belief about the presence of the LORD dwelling in the holy of holies: 'O God of truth, let thy holy Logos come and dwell [*epidemesato*] upon this bread, that the bread may become the body of the Logos and upon this cup that the cup may become the cup of the truth ...' There is a long *epiklesis* in the *Acts of Thomas* 27, which calls on Christ to 'come'. All those who have been sealed with baptism perceive a human form and then receive the bread of the Eucharist. In the earlier period, the Spirit was understood to be the Logos (e.g. Justin, *Apology* 1.33: 'It

is wrong to understand the Spirit and the Power of God as anything else than the Word who is also the firstborn of God'). It was not until Cyril of Jerusalem (mid-fourth century) that the Third Person Spirit *epiklesis* began to be used, the prayer for the Father to send the Spirit onto the bread and wine.

The form in *Addai and Mari* is addressed to the Son: 'O my LORD, may thy Holy Spirit come and rest upon this offering', but other unique features of this prayer invite speculation as to its ultimate origin. The original form has no mention of God the Father or of the Trinity, of the crucifixion or resurrection of Jesus, it does not mention bread, wine, cup, Body or Blood, or the name of Jesus. There is no reference to partaking or communion. Dix again:

> All these things ... are not of the framework of the prayer as they are the framework of the prayers that have been inspired by the systematic Greek theological tradition. Addai and Mari is a eucharistic prayer which is concentrated solely upon the experience of the Eucharist ... *Maranatha* ... The ecstatic cry of the first pre-Pauline Aramaic speaking disciples is the summary of what it has to say.[10]

Was this derived from a temple prayer from the Day of Atonement? There were 'a great many of the priests obedient to the faith' in the earliest days in Jerusalem (Acts 6.7).

Several writers reveal that it was the Word which came into the bread and wine, but complications arise from the fact that *logos* can be understood to mean both the Word, the Second Person, or simply a prayer. Irenaeus, for example, argued '... if the cup which has been mixed and the bread which has been made receives the Word of God and becomes the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ ...' (*Against Heresies* 5.2.3, PG 7. 1125, also 1127). Origen, commenting on the Eucharist, said that the consecration was 'by the Word of God and prayer' (quoting 1 Tim. 4.5), where 'word' could be understood in either sense (*On Matthew* 11, PG 13. 948–9), but his usage elsewhere suggests that he intended the Second Person. Athanasius taught that after great prayers and holy invocations, 'the Word comes down into the bread and wine and it becomes his body' (*Sermon to the Baptized*, PG 26.1325). As late as the early sixth century, Jacob of Serug could write: 'Together with the priest, the whole people beseeches the Father that he will send his Son, that he may come down and dwell upon the oblation.' (*Homily* III.657)

The Traditions of the Priests

The mystery of the Eucharist was associated with Melchizedek. Eusebius wrote: 'Our Saviour Jesus, the Christ of God, even now performs through his ministers today sacrifices after the manner of Melchizedek' (*Proof* 5.3). Melchizedek is known in the Hebrew

Scriptures only as the king of Salem, the priest of God Most High who brought out bread and wine to Abraham (Gen. 14.18), and as the royal high priest, the divine Son who would bring the Day of Judgement (Ps. 110). In the Qumran Melchizedek text, however, he is divine, the heavenly high priest, the anointed prince who comes to Jerusalem to perform the Great Atonement at the end of the tenth Jubilee and to establish the Kingdom. In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as this Melchizedek (Heb. 7.15), and the bread and wine of his sacrifice must have had some link to the bread and wine of Melchizedek.

What this was we can only guess, but the meal of bread and wine was associated with the vesting of the (high?) priest. The *Testament of Levi* describes how seven angels vested him and fed him 'bread and wine, the most holy things'[11] (*T. Levi* 8.5), suggesting that consuming bread and wine was a part of the consecration process. In the Hebrew Scriptures 'the most holy things' are the priests' portion of the offerings, and only the priests could consume them (e.g. Lev. 6.29; Ezek. 42.13; Ezra 2.63). The 'most holy' was originally believed to communicate holiness (e.g. Exod. 29.37), but at the beginning of the second temple period there was a new ruling from the priests and only uncleanness was held to be contagious (Hag. 2.12). This is significant as it suggests that the communication of holiness through consuming sacrificial offerings was a characteristic of the 'Melchizedek' cult of the first temple but not of the second. It was, however, known to the author of the *Testament of Levi,* and so this may have been how the elements of the Eucharist were originally understood.

The *Testament of Levi* also describes the priestly service of the archangels in the highest heaven; they offer atonement sacrifices before the Great Glory and these offerings are described as bloodless and *logike*, literally 'logical' or 'intellectual' but commonly rendered 'reasonable', 'the reasonable and bloodless sacrifice' (*T. Levi* 3.6). It has been suggested, however, that *logike* in the context of liturgy indicates 'belonging to the Logos', just as it is used by Clement to describe the flock of the Good Shepherd who were not 'reasonable' sheep, but sheep of the Logos (*Instructor* 3.123).[12] The atonement sacrifice offered by the archangels in Levi's vision would then be the bloodless sacrifice of the Logos. What we cannot tell is whether or not this was a pre-Christian text and whether or not other references to the 'reasonable' sacrifice should be understood in this way.

There is nothing in the Hebrew Scriptures or in any related text which describes or explains the mystery of the holy of holies and how the presence of the LORD was believed to be present. This must, however, have been known to the priests who officiated there, and raises the question of what it was that Jesus the high priest is said to have transmitted secretly to a few of his disciples after his own experience of 'resurrection'. The evidence is consistent from the earliest period.

Ignatius of Antioch wrote, early in the second century, that our own high priest is greater (than those of old) for 'he has been entrusted with the holy of holies and to him alone are the secret things of God committed' (*Phil.* 9). Clement of Alexandria condemned people who were 'making a perverse use of divine words ... they do not enter in as we enter in, through the tradition of the LORD by drawing aside the curtain' (*Misc.* 7.17). The 'true teachers preserved the tradition of blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles (*Misc.* 1.1) and this tradition had 'been imparted unwritten by the apostles' (*Misc.* 6.7). There had been mysteries concealed in the Old Testament which the LORD revealed to the apostles and 'there were certainly among the Hebrews some things delivered unwritten' (*Misc.* 5.10).

The most likely mysteries to have been concealed in the Old Testament and transmitted unwritten are those of the priests, especially the secrets of the holy of holies. There is no known explanation of the rites of atonement; all that survive are the practical details of how the ritual was to be performed. The blood of the sacrifice had to be stirred by an attendant to prevent it clotting so that it could not be sprinkled (*m. Yoma* 4.3), but of the high priest's prayer in the temple no detail is given (*m. Yoma* 5.1). Only the public prayer is recorded (*m. Yoma* 6.2). Gardeners could buy the surplus blood for their gardens (*m. Yoma* 5.6), but no 'theology' of the blood sprinkling is offered.

Fragments of sanctuary lore, apart from the evidence in the Book of Revelation itself, have survived in Daniel 7 and the *Parables of Enoch*. In Daniel's vision, thought to be closely related to the royal rites of Psalm 2, the Man came in clouds (of incense?) before the One on the heavenly throne and 'was offered in sacrifice to him' (Dan. 7.13). The word usually rendered 'was presented before him' (*qrb*, literally 'brought near') is the term used for making a temple offering.[13] Given the temple context of this vision, 'offered as a sacrifice' is the more likely meaning. The one offered is then enthroned and given power 'over all peoples, nations and languages'. In the *Parables of Enoch*, the blood of the Righteous One was taken up before the LORD of Spirits, together with the prayers of the righteous ones. The holy ones in heaven 'unite with one voice to pray and praise and give thanks and bless the name of the LORD of Spirits'. This is the thanksgiving element of the Eucharist. Then the books of the living were opened and read, and the 'number' of the righteous whose blood 'has been offered' was brought near to the throne (*1 En.* 47.4, where the Ethiopic implies the same word as in Dan. 7.13). This corresponds to the reading of the diptychs in the liturgy, the names of the living and the names of the dead who were remembered at the Eucharist. Next, in the *Parables*, the Man was given the Name in the presence of the LORD of Spirits (i.e. he became the LORD), in the time and place before the stars and the heavens were created (i.e. in the holy of holies, Day One of Creation). He became the

staff of the righteous, the light of the Gentiles, and all on earth were to worship him. All these things were 'hidden before the creation of the world and for eternity', i.e. in the holy of holies (*1 En.* 48.2–3). Then the kings of the earth were judged, and 'the light of days' rested upon the holy and righteous ones. This is the establishing of the Kingdom, the place of divine light (Rev. 22.5). The sequence is interesting and it must be related to the sequence in the Liturgy. It was certainly known to the early Christians: the anointed one in human form (the Man) poured himself out, was raised up (into heaven), given the Name, and then worshipped (Phil. 2. 6–11).

Origen, who knew *1 Enoch*, said that Jesus 'beheld these weighty secrets and made them known to a few' (*Celsus* 3.37). There were doctrines spoken in private to Jesus' genuine disciples, but the words were not written down (*Celsus* 3.60; 6.6). 'If anyone is worthy to know the ineffable things he will learn the wisdom hidden in the mystery which God established before the ages' (*On Matthew* 7.2). 'Before the ages' in temple terminology means 'in the holy of holies'. Origen had had contact with Jewish scholars when he lived in Caesarea and must have had good reason to write: 'The Jews used to tell of many things in accordance with secret traditions reserved to a few, for they had other knowledge than that which was common and made public' (*On John* 19.92).

Basil of Caesarea, writing in the mid-fourth century, emphasized that some teachings of the Church were drawn from written sources, but others were given secretly through apostolic tradition. If we attacked unwritten customs, he argued, claiming them to be of little importance, we would fatally mutilate the gospel. There was no written authority for signing with the cross, and none for praying facing towards the east, although Origen knew that this latter was linked to the Day of Atonement (*On Leviticus* 9.10). Above all, Basil cited the words used in the Eucharist:

> Have any saints left for us in writing the words used in the invocation over the eucharistic bread and the cup of blessing? As everyone knows we are not content in the liturgy simply to recite the words recorded by St Paul or the Gospels, but we add other words both before and after, words of great importance for this mystery. We have received these words from unwritten teaching ... which our fathers guarded in silence, safe from meddling and petty curiosity.

The uninitiated were not even allowed to be present at the mysteries, and this he linked to the custom of the temple: 'Only one chosen from all the priests was admitted to the innermost sanctuary ... so that he would be amazed by the novelty and strangeness of gazing on the holy of holies.' He went on to distinguish: 'Dogma is one thing *kerygma* another; the first is observed in silence while the latter is proclaimed to the world' (*On the Holy Spirit* 66). Basil preserved the mystery he had

received, but there are enough hints here to show he was speaking of the words of the *epiklesis*, and that these were associated with the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement.

Church and Temple

Later texts also indicate that the temple was the setting of the Eucharist, and the Day of Atonement its immediate model. Narsai (*Homily* XVII A) compared his contemplation of the mysteries of the Eucharist to Isaiah's vision of the LORD enthroned in the holy of holies. Only those who bore the mark like the temple priests were permitted to participate. They were also described as clad in garments of glory, and, like the guest without a wedding garment at the great wedding feast, outsiders were cast out (Matt. 22.13). The celebrating priest 'bore in himself the image of our LORD in that hour', and was warned to be worthy of that state, as were the temple priests who were warned not to bear the Name of the LORD in vain (Exod. 20.7). The curious situation of the one who represents the LORD offering elements which also represent the LORD exactly parallels the temple custom, where the high priest representing the LORD offered the blood of the goat which represented the LORD (Lev. 16.8, *lyhwh*, 'as the LORD', cf. Heb. 9.12 which implies this).

Narsai offers two sets of symbolism, one derived from the death and burial of Jesus, but the other from the temple. This may reflect the differing emphases of Antioch and Alexandria, but it could also be a memory of the early Church describing the earthly life of Jesus in terms of the high priestly traditions of the temple. There is evidence of this as early as Peter's temple sermon, where he describes the Parousia as the heavenly high priest emerging from the holy of holies to renew the creation (Acts 3.13–21). For 'Narsai' the sanctuary of the church is 'a type of that Kingdom which our LORD entered and into which he will bring with him all his friends' (cf. the holy of holies as the heavenly city, Rev. 22.16). The Christian altar is the symbol of the great and glorious throne (as was the *kapporet* above the ark in the holy of holies, Exod. 25.17–22). As on the Day of Atonement, so now, the priest 'trembles with fear for himself and for his people at that dread hour'. The people are exhorted to contemplate the Messiah enthroned in heaven who is also the one lying slain on the altar (cf. John's word play on the themes of crucifixion and exaltation: 'the Son of Man is lifted up', John 3.14; 8.28; 12.32, 34).

There follows a description of the scene in the sanctuary that evokes the descriptions of heavenly worship in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the moment of silence which preceded the appearance of the great high priest (Rev. 8.1):

> The priests are still and the deacons stand in silence, the whole people is quiet and still, subdued and calm. . . . the mysteries are set in order, the censers are smoking, the lamps

are shining, and the deacons are hovering and brandishing [fans] in the likeness of the Watchers. Deep silence and peaceful calm settles on that place; it is filled and overflows with brightness and splendour, beauty and power.

The people join in the Sanctus, the song of the angels in Isaiah's throne vision and John's (Isa. 6.3; Rev. 4.8), and the priest speaks the words which 'the chosen apostles have not made known to us in the Gospels'. The Spirit comes to the bread and wine and 'the Spirit which raised him from the dead comes down now and celebrates the Mysteries of the resurrection of his body'. *The consecration is the moment of resurrection*, another remarkable link to the royal traditions of Israel, for the king was deemed to be resurrected (translated 'raised up', 2 Sam. 23.1) and he too became the LORD enthroned and he too was worshipped (1 Chron. 29.20–23), the LORD with his people.

The Anthem of the Sanctuary in the *Liturgy of Addai and Mari* describes a similar setting:

Thy throne O God endureth for ever. The cherubim compass the terrible seat of thy majesty and with fear moving their wings cover their faces for that they cannot lift up their eyes and behold the fire of thy Godhead. Thus art Thou glorified and dwellest among men, not to burn them up but to enlighten them. Great O my LORD is Thy mercy and Thy grace which thou hast showed to our race.

The ultimate source of this must be Isaiah 33.13–22, which contrasts the fear of sinners at the prospect of the everlasting fires, and the vision of the king in his beauty which awaits the upright. Compare also Enoch's account of the flaming fire around the heavenly throne, that no angels could enter because of the brightness (i.e. no ordinary priests could enter the holy of holies), and that no flesh could gaze upon the Glory. Enoch lay prostrate and trembling until invited to enter (*1 En.* 14.21–25).

Priests and deacons, 'thousands of Watchers and ministers of fire and spirit go forth' with the resurrected LORD, said Narsai, and the people 'rejoice when they see the Body setting forth from the midst of the altar'. This is exactly the procession described for the Day of the LORD, the Day of Judgement, when the LORD goes forth from his Holy Place with all his holy ones (Deut. 32.43, expanded in *Ass. Mos.* 10; Deut. 33.2–5). The effect of receiving the Body of the risen LORD was that of the Day of Atonement, when the high priest emerged from the holy of holies, carrying the blood which cleansed and hallowed (Lev. 16.19), healing and renewing the creation which the temple represented. The Body of the Risen LORD, wrote Narsai, 'pardons debts, purifies blemishes, heals diseases, cleanses and purges stains with the hyssop of his mercy' (cf. Acts 3.19: 'times of refreshing come from the presence of the LORD' when the Anointed One returns).

Germanus of Constantinople (early eighth century) in his book *On*

the Divine Liturgy presents the temple symbolism in great detail, alongside symbolism drawn from the life of Jesus. 'The church is an earthly heaven', he wrote, 'in which the super-celestial God dwells and walks about' (#1). This must be the garden of Eden, which had been represented in the temple by the great hall. After comparing the apse to the cave of Christ's birth and burial and the table to the place where his dead body rested, he continues: 'The holy table is also the throne of God on which, borne by the cherubim, he rested in the body ... The altar is and is called the heavenly and spiritual altar where the earthly and material priests who always assist and serve the LORD represent the spiritual, serving and hierarchical powers' (#4, 6, also 41). The holy table, the spiritual altar, corresponds to the *kapporet* over the ark, the cherub throne where the blood of the LORD was offered by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. The chancel barriers correspond in function to the veil of the temple, separating 'the holy of holies accessible only to the priests' (#9). The twenty-four presbyters are the seraphic powers (cf. Rev. 4.4) and the seven deacons are images of the angelic powers (cf. Rev. 4.5, #16, but also the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* which describe the seven angels who are the ruling princes of the sanctuary and the account by John Chrysostom of an old man – presumably himself – who saw angels in shining robes around the altar (*On Priesthood* 6.4.45–50).

The priest before the altar speaks to God, as did Moses in the tabernacle, when the LORD spoke to him from above the *kapporet*, between the cherubim (Exod. 25. 22, #41) and the priest sees the glory of the LORD.

> God truly spoke invisibly to Moses and Moses to God; so now the priest, standing between the two cherubim in the sanctuary and bowing on account of the dreadful and uncontemplable glory and brightness of the Godhead and contemplating the heavenly liturgy, is initiated even into the splendour of the life-giving Trinity ... (#41)

The heavenly host in the sanctuary is represented by the deacons holding fans 'in the likeness of the six winged seraphim and the many eyed cherubim' (#41), exactly as in the Hebrew Scriptures, where the priests were the angels of the LORD (e.g. Mal. 2.7), and in the Qumran *Hymns* and *Blessings*, for example, 'May you attend upon the service in the temple of the Kingdom and decree destiny in company with the angels of the presence ... may he consecrate you to the holy of holies' (1QSb IV); '... standing with the host of the holy ones ... with the congregation of the sons of heaven' (1QH XI, formerly III). The *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* speak of 'the priests of the inner temple, ministers of the presence of the most holy king ... their expiations shall obtain his goodwill for those who repent from sin ...' (4Q400), and of the wings of the cherubim falling silent as the they bless the heavenly throne (4Q405). As in the liturgy, there are processions through the doors of

glory when the *'elohim* and the holy angels enter and leave, proclaiming the glory of the King (4Q405), cf. 'The Cherubic Hymn signified the entrance of all the saints and righteous ahead of the cherubic powers and the angelic hosts who run invisibly in advance of the Great King, Christ ...' (#37). *The Qumran Hymns and Blessings, and the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, must derive from the actual temple services which have survived as Christian liturgy.*

The Sogitha on the Church of Edessa, composed in the mid-sixth century, mentions 'the cherubim of its altar'; a description (late fifth century) of the church at Quartamin mentions a cherub over the altar; and the account of the Muslim capture of the church of St Jacob in Aleppo alludes to the destruction of the cherubim above the altar – all three indicating that the earliest Christian altars derived from the *kapporet*. In Ethiopian churches, there is an ark in the sanctuary.

The Sacrifice

Perhaps the most striking parallel of all between the Day of Atonement and the Liturgy is the manner of preparing the bread. The central portion of the loaf is removed in the manner of a sacrifice, and is then known as the holy bread or the Lamb. An exactly similar procedure was used for the sin offering on the Day of Atonement in the first century CE, according to the *Letter of Barnabas* which differs at this point from the Mishnah. According to the latter, the high priest cut open the goat of the sin offering and removed the sacrificial portions (the fat over the entrails, the kidneys and a part of the liver, Lev. 4.8–10) and then burned them on the altar before sending the rest of the carcase to be burned outside the temple (*m. Yoma* 6.7; the comparison in Heb. 13.10–13 is confused). Barnabas, however, says that the goat was eaten: the people consumed the carcase, but the priests had the sacrificial portions, mixed with sour wine:

> What does it say in the prophet? Let them eat of the goat which is offered for their sins at the fast and, note this carefully, let all the priests but nobody else, eat of its inwards parts, unwashed and with vinegar. Why was this? Because, 'When I am about to give my body for the sins of this new people of mine, you will be giving me gall and vinegar to drink ...' (*Barn.* 7).[14]

Barnabas, a Levite (Acts 4.36), interpreted the crucifixion as the sin offering and the vinegar which Jesus drank (John 19.29) as the vinegar of the sacrificial portion eaten by the priests. This must be the origin of the custom of removing the middle portion of the loaf and mixing it with wine.

The role of the bread in the temple is another mystery. Twelve loaves, the 'Bread of the Presence' (literally 'the Face'), were set on a golden table in the great hall of the temple, together with incense and

flagons for drink offerings (Exod. 25.29–30). The bread became holy while it was in the temple: before being taken in, it was placed on a marble table but when it was brought out it was placed on a table of gold because it had become holy (*m. Shekalim* 6.4). The loaves were eaten by the high priests every Sabbath, perhaps the origin of the weekly celebration of the Eucharist. The prothesis prayer in the liturgy of the Coptic Jacobites preserves the tradition of the Bread of the Face: 'LORD Jesus Christ ... the living bread which came down from heaven ... make thy face shine upon this bread and upon this cup which we have set upon this thy priestly table.'

The Older Testament?

There is much about the temple that is still unknown. There are also several texts in the Hebrew Scriptures which cannot be placed in any known context. Together, however, these texts have a certain consistency which at the very least invites speculation.

- Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High, brought out bread and wine (Gen. 14.18). Until the discovery of the Melchizedek text at Qumran, Melchizedek was thought to be a relatively minor figure in the tradition; it is now clear that he was the Messiah, expected to make the final atonement sacrifice at the end of the tenth Jubilee. Melchizedek was 'born' in the holy of holies among the holy ones (Ps. 110. LXX Ps. 109) and was the eternal priest, not by virture of descent from Levi, but because he had been raised up, i.e. resurrected (Heb. 7.15–16).
- Moses, the high priests and the elders who stood before the heavenly throne saw the God of Israel and ate and drank before him. They suffered no harm (Exod. 24. 9–11). What was this meal?
- When Moses offered his own life for the sins of Israel he was told that such a sacrifice was not possible; each man bore his own sin (Exod. 32.30–33). What older view of atonement was excluded from the Hebrew Scriptures?
- The secret things belonged to the LORD and were no concern of humans (Deut. 29.29). What mattered was keeping the Law, and nobody needed to go up to heaven to receive that (Deut. 30.11–14). Who had formerly gone up to heaven to learn the secret things?
- Aaron was only permitted to enter the holy of holies once a year; had the earlier practice been different? (Lev. 16.2)
- Ezekiel knew that the mark of the LORD was a *tau*, at that period written as a diagonal cross (Ezek. 9.4). This mark protected from the wrath.

When Eusebius described the re-establishment of the churches in the time of Constantine, he included an account of the oration delivered to

Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre (*History* 10.4). The new building was compared to the tabernacle and the temple, its builder to Bezalel and Solomon. This could indicate that the church was deliberately adopting the temple as its model and that all temple elements in the later liturgies were a conscious imitation of the older rites. Origen, however, had known of the temple traditions a century earlier, and he had also known of the secret traditions of both Jews and Christians. It is more likely that there had been an unbroken tradition from the temple liturgies into the Church.

There is insufficient evidence for certainty, but such as there is indicates that the great high priest gave to his followers a new way of offering the sacrifice of atonement. *It was the very oldest understanding of the Day of Atonement, and it was perpetuated in the Eucharist.*

5

THE TEMPLE ROOTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LITURGY[1]

At the centre of Christian worship is the Eucharist, yet its origins are still a matter for speculation. It used to be fashionable to seek the roots of Christian prayers and liturgy only in the synagogue or in the blessings and prayers associated with communal meals.[2] Only a generation ago, Werner could write: 'It is remarkable how few traces of the solemn liturgies of the High Holy Days have been left in Christian worship', and before that, Oesterley had stated that 'Christ was more associated with the synagogue type of worship than with that of the temple'.[3] The association of the Last Supper with the Passover has often led to Passover imagery being the only context considered for the context of the Eucharist. Since the New Testament interprets the death of Jesus as atonement (e.g. 1 Cor. 15.3) and links the Eucharist to his death, there must have been from the start some link between Eucharist and atonement. Since Jesus is depicted as the great high priest offering his blood as the atonement sacrifice (Heb. 9.11–12), and the imagery of the Eucharist is sacrificial, this must have been the high priest's atonement sacrifice in the temple, rather than just the time of fasting observed by the people.

The Day of Atonement

It is true that very little is known about temple practices, but certain areas do invite further examination. The Letter to the Hebrews, where Christ is presented as the high priest offering the atonement sacrifice,[4] provides the starting point for an investigation into the temple roots of the Christian Liturgy. Christ's offering as the great high priest on the Day of Atonement was vividly enacted by the medieval popes each Maundy Thursday in the Lateran basilica, which claimed to house many temple relics, including the ark of the covenant encased in the high altar. 'Despite the doubts regarding the historical veracity of the temple spoils, every visitor to the Lateran basilica in the high Middle Ages would have noticed that this church wanted to be seen as the direct successor of the temple of Jerusalem.' On Maundy Thursday the Pope commemorated the origin of the Eucharist by performing a unique ritual.

> After the Creed, the assisting cardinals remove the table (*mensa*) of the altar ... then the Pope approaches the altar. From the cavity of the altar block he takes a reliquary containing some blood of Christ and shows this to the people. ... then the Pope celebrates the Eucharist alone on the hollow altar ... The ceremony with the *mensa*, the blood relic and the hollow altar is specific to the Lateran.

The earliest record of this ceremony is in the *Liber de Vita Christiana*, written by Bonizo, Bishop of Sutri, who died in 1095 CE, although there is a seventh-century reference to the 'hollow altar'.[5] A blood offering over the 'ark' on Maundy Thursday can only have been developed from the Day of Atonement,[6] linking the origin of the Eucharist to that ritual. This was 'the high priest of the new covenant as he performed his most exclusive liturgical function. ... It was above the physical remains of the cult of the old covenant that the pope was celebrating'.[7]

There is also the evidence of the old lectionaries. Why did the Jacobites and others transfer to Good Friday and Holy Saturday the traditional Jewish readings for the Day of Atonement?

> The liturgical element of the Jewish New Year, with its prophetic connotation of penitence and atonement, was, among Christians, shifted to the days immediately preceding Easter, the Christian time for mourning and preparation. Yet the ancient Jewish overtones of Passover, so deeply rooted in the Synagogue and Early Church, could not vanish altogether ...

Was there more to this shift than the recognition by the Church that this was the greatest fast day of the year? '... the liturgical identity of Holy Saturday and Yom Kippur rests upon two conceptions; both are great days of mourning and fasting, and both are memorials of the world's creation'.[8] The presence of Passover associations needs no explanation; the crucifixion occurred at that time of the year. What does need explaining is why the imagery and traditions of the Day of Atonement (both the penitence and the recreation of the world) were moved from the autumn festival to the spring. The *Letter of Barnabas*, traditionally regarded as a first-century text, links the Day of Atonement to Good Friday (*Barn.* 7), and this was also known to Justin (*Trypho* 40) and to Tertullian (*De Jejuniis* 2). From the outset, Jesus' death was linked to the Day of Atonement, even though the calendar linked the time of his death to the Passover.

But what had this atonement sacrifice been? William Robertson Smith, in his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (delivered in 1888–89 and first published in 1894) was certainly correct when he concluded: 'The worship of the second temple was an antiquarian resuscitation of forms which had lost their intimate connection with the national life and therefore had lost the greater part of their original significance.'[9] According to *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* atonement was 'the keystone of the sacrificial system of post-exilic Israel'. In other words, the extent of our ignorance about the Day of Atonement, the central rite of atonement, is the extent of our ignorance about Israel's religion, and furthermore, what we read of it in the post-exilic texts may not be the best source of information about its original significance, nor about this root of the Eucharist. *The temple roots of the Christian Liturgies lie very deep in the first temple, and have to be reconstructed from a variety of sources.*

This problem is well illustrated by Dillistone's observation in his widely read book, *The Christian Understanding of Atonement:* 'From the New Testament there come hints, suggestions, even daring affirmations of a comprehensive cosmic reconciliation.' He doubted that this came from Hebrew thought and so suggested: 'It was not until early Christian witnesses found themselves confronted by pagan systems in which a full theory of cosmic redemption played a prominent part that the effect of the work of Christ upon the cosmos at large began to receive serious consideration.'[10] This is not the case; the original significance of the Day of Atonement was precisely this restoration of the creation, the renewal of the eternal covenant, and this is where one of the roots of the Eucharist is to be found. The pre-Christian roots of the idea of atonement have played a very small part in the treatment of the subject; a recent report by the Church of England's Doctrine Commission dealt with atonement without mentioning Leviticus.[11]

There were two rituals exclusive to the ancient high priests: entering the holy of holies with the blood on the Day of Atonement and consuming the bread of the Presence.[12] Since these two are closely linked to the elements of the Eucharist, *it seems likely that the high priestly traditions are the ultimate source of the imagery.* There are, however, problems reconstructing the history and traditions of the high priesthood, not least because there is no certain reference to Aaron nor to his priests in any pre-exilic text. Even Ezekiel, who was a priest in the first temple, does not mention him. The Elephantine texts, which give a glimpse of Jewish life in Egypt in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE often mention priests but never Aaron, nor Levi nor the Levites.[13] Any rites and duties associated with Aaron probably came from the older royal priesthood of Melchizedek. The one appearance Melchizedek himself makes in the Old Testament is to bring out bread and wine (Gen. 14.18) which the Midrash says were a symbol of the laws of priesthood, the bread being the Bread of the Presence[14] (*Gen. R.* XLIII. 6). Philo, when discussing the hospitality gifts of bread and water, said of him: 'Let Melchizedek offer wine instead of water' (*Allegorical Interpretation* 3.82), an obvious link to the miracle at Cana, which, according to John, was the first manifestation of Jesus' Glory (John 2.11).

The Eucharist has frequently been linked to the Passover, because the Last Supper is linked to that festival,[15] John set the crucifixion at the time of the Passover sacrifices, and Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that 'Christ our Passover has been sacrificed' (1. Cor. 5.7). But there are immediate and obvious problems trying to link the Eucharist with Passover as we recognize it: *the Passover was the only sacrifice not offered by a priest* (*m. Pesaḥim* 5.5ff., on Exod. 12.6), and the essential element was that the offering was whole (Exod. 12.46), whereas the descriptions of the Last Supper in their various forms emphasize that the bread was

broken.[16] Further, the cup at the Last Supper is linked to the covenant (except the Western text of Luke[17]), and the Letter to the Hebrews links the death of Jesus to the covenant renewed on the Day of Atonement (Heb. 9.11–15). Matthew's form of the words, 'My blood of the covenant poured out for many for the *'aphesis* of sins' (Matt. 26.28), suggests the same context, since *'aphesis* was the translation for the Hebrew *d'ror*, liberty, the characteristic of the Jubilee which was inaugurated on the Day of Atonement (LXX, Lev. 25.10; Isa. 61.1; also Luke 4.18). Since the great Jubilee at the end of the second temple period was associated in the Qumran Melchizedek text (11QMelch) with the appearance of Melchizedek and his atonement sacrifice, we have here a possible contemporary context for the words of institution.

The early liturgies do not use the Passover/Exodus imagery of being the chosen people and being liberated from slavery. In the *Didache*, for example, there is thanksgiving for the gifts of knowledge and eternal life, and for the Sacred Name dwelling in the hearts of those who have received the spiritual food (*Didache* 9–10). This is priestly Wisdom imagery. The hope for the ingathering of the scattered Church into the Kingdom is a Jubilee image derived ultimately from the covenant restoration on the Day of Atonement. Bishop Sarapion (mid-fourth-century Egypt) prayed in his Eucharist that his people would become 'living', i.e. resurrected, and able to speak of the mysteries, that the spiritual food would be the medicine of life to heal every sickness. He prayed, 'Make us wise by the participation of the body and the blood.'

The Tradition of the Priests

Let us now consider the words of Bishop Sarapion's contemporary, St Basil of Caesarea, who died 379 CE. In his treatise *On the Holy Spirit*, he emphasized the unwritten traditions of the Church. Where, he asked, do we find in writing anything about signing with the cross (at baptism), or about turning to the east to pray?

> Which of the saints has left us in writing the words of invocation [*epiklesis*] at the offering of the bread of the Eucharist and the cup of blessing? For, as it is well known, we are not satisfied with saying the words which the Apostle and the Gospel have recorded, but, before and after these words we add other words, on the grounds that they have great strength for the mystery. And these words we have received from the unwritten teaching. (*On the Holy Spirit* 66)

He continued with a description of the temple and the forbidden areas.

Origen had written something similar a century or so earlier, in his *Homily 5 on Numbers*. He compared these same Christian practices – praying towards the east, the rites of baptism and the Eucharist – to the secrets of the temple which were guarded by the priests. Commenting on Numbers 4, the instructions for transporting the tabernacle through

the desert, he emphasized that the family of Kohath were only permitted to carry the sacred objects but not to see them. Only Aaron the high priest and his sons were permitted to see what was in the holy place; then they had to cover the sacred objects with veils before handing them to others, who were only permitted to carry them.[18] The mysteries of the Church were similar, 'handed down and entrusted to us by the high priest and his sons'. Origen does not say who this high priest was; we assume it was Jesus and his disciples, but Origen could have known a continuity between the Christian mysteries and those of the temple priesthood. Origen had close contact with the Jewish scholars in Caesarea and he knew at least one of what we nowadays call the Dead Sea Scrolls.[19]

The duties of the ancient priests had been defined as 'guarding all matters concerning the altar and what was within the veil' (Num. 3.10; 18.7, LXX *phulaxein, diaterein* respectively), and as early as the letter of Ignatius to the Philadelphians, we read: 'Our own high priest is greater (than the priests of old) for he has been entrusted with the Holy of Holies and to him alone are the secret things of God committed' (*Phil.* 9). Clement of Alexandria used similar imagery: those who have the truth enter by drawing aside the curtain (*Misc.* 7.17). He knew that there were 'among the Hebrews some things delivered unwritten' (*Misc.* 5.10). Origen, too, spoke often of the unwritten or secret tradition (e.g. *Celsus* 3.37; 6.6; *Preface to First Principles*), the mystery 'established before the ages' (*On Matthew* 17.2).[20] 'Before the ages' indicates the holy of holies, since whatever happened there was deemed to be beyond time and thus outside the material creation. One of the secrets of the holy of holies was resurrection, the state beyond time and matter, and so Jesus described the resurrected as sons of God, angels (Luke 20.36). The *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Dionysius opens with reference to these mysteries, 'the things of the hidden God', which had to be shared only by sacred enlightenment with sacred men. Timothy, to whom the treatise was addressed, was warned: 'See to it that you do not betray the holy of holies ... keep these things of God unshared and undefiled by the uninitiated' (372A).

Of the examples given by Basil, facing the east to pray and signing with a cross can be identified as customs dating back to the first temple. During Tabernacles in the second temple, a procession would turn back at the eastern gate and face towards the temple saying: 'Our fathers when they were in this place turned with their backs towards the temple of the LORD and their faces towards the east and they worshipped the sun towards the east; but as for us, our eyes are turned toward the LORD' (*m. Sukkah* 5.4). This refers to Ezekiel's account of men in the temple facing east, holding branches before their faces and worshipping the sun (Ezek. 8.16–18), presumably in a celebration akin to Tabernacles. The Therapeuts (Philo, *On the Contemplative Life* 27)

and the Essenes (Josephus, *War* 2.128) also worshipped towards the rising sun, and the vision in Revelation 7 describes a great multitude holding palm branches, standing before the angel who came from the sunrise with the seal of the living God. Worshipping towards the east must have been a practice which distinguished the adherents of first temple customs from those favoured by the compilers of the Mishnah.[21] Among these would have been the Christian community depicted in the Book of Revelation who set the risen LORD in the centre of a great heavenly liturgy, and described themselves, like the priests of old, as the guardians of the commandments of God who had the testimony of Jesus. They knew what he had seen (Rev. 12.17). They spoke with angels and guarded the words of the prophecies (Rev. 22.9).

Signing with a cross was also a custom from the first temple. When Ezekiel received his vision of the destruction of Jerusalem, he saw the six angels of judgement and a seventh figure, who was instructed to pass through the city and mark a letter *tau* on the foreheads of those who were faithful to the LORD (Ezek. 9.4). In the old Hebrew alphabet, the *tau* is a diagonal cross, the sign which was also used when the high priest was anointed on his forehead (*b. Horayoth* 12a). The anointed high priest was distinguished from the one who only wore the garments of high priesthood (*m. Horayoth* 3.4), and, since the true anointing oil had been hidden away in the time of Josiah (*b. Horayoth* 12a, *b. Keritoth* 5b), the tradition of anointing the high priest in this way must have been another first temple custom which was not observed during the second temple.

Christian customs, then, perpetuated practices which had very ancient roots but had not been current in the second temple. Presumably the Christians also perpetuated the beliefs that accompanied those practices: the belief that Wisdom had been banished from Jerusalem when Josiah changed the temple cult (*1 En.* 93.8), that she had been known as the Queen of Heaven (Jer. 44.17–19) and that the gift of Wisdom was good and made humans like gods (i.e. gave them eternal life), just as the serpent in Eden had said. Early Christian practice linked the gifts of Wisdom and Life to consuming bread and wine, and we have to ask why. We are not looking for continuity with the actual temple practices of the first century CE, but with a remembered, perhaps idealized, system that was much older. We are looking for the temple destroyed in the time of Josiah, rather than the second temple which was condemned by the Third Isaiah as a place of corrupted cult (Isa. 66.3); by Malachi (*passim*) as offering polluted bread and having an impure priesthood; and in the Enoch tradition as impure and offering polluted bread, having been built by an apostate generation (*1 En.* 89.73; 93.9). One of the themes of the Book of Revelation is that the banished Wisdom returns with/as her new city, after the second temple Jerusalem has been burned.[22]

Where had this ancient temple system, known to Jesus and John his prophet, been preserved? The Qumran *Melchizedek* text has a possible reading about people in the last days whose teachers have been kept hidden and secret;[23] perhaps they had been preserving the older ways. The *Damascus Document*, another text found at Qumran, is quite clear that a remnant knew the 'hidden things in which all Israel has gone astray' and the examples given are 'his holy Sabbaths and his glorious feasts' (CD III).[24] These are usually interpreted as a dispute about the calendar, and this was certainly a part of the problem. But only a part! There could well have been disputes over the significance and manner of observing those Sabbaths and feasts: 'They shall keep the Sabbath Day according to its exact interpretation and the feasts and the Day of Fasting according to the finding of the members of the New Covenant in the land of Damascus' (CD VI). The problem concerned the Sabbath and especially the Day of Fasting, i.e. the Day of Atonement. This group also held a 'pure meal' of bread and wine, which had to be blessed by the priest before anyone took the first piece (1QSa).[25]

This remnant is very similar to the group depicted in the Book of Revelation. The Damascus remnant are 'called by Name and stand at the end of days', i.e. they are the resurrected to wear the sacred Name, just like the redeemed in the holy of holies at the end of the Book of Revelation (Rev. 22.4).[26] They are also like those who participated in the Eucharist of the *Didache*, who gave thanks for knowledge and eternal life, or the congregation of Bishop Sarapion who prayed at the Eucharist that his people might become living and wise. The group depicted in the *Damascus Document* and the Christians believed themselves to be guardians of the true teaching: 'they keep the commandments of God and have the visions of Jesus' (Rev. 12. 17). The community of the *Damascus Document* had similar concerns to those of the early Christians, although, as is well known, there were also important differences. There seems here to be a continuity, an awareness of something behind the Hebrew Scriptures (what I called 'The Older Testament[27]' that passed into the New Testament and *then into the Christian Liturgies*.

Basil's third example of unwritten tradition is the *epiklesis* at the Eucharist. The later forms of this prayer, known from the time of Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catecheses* 23.7),[28] call on God the Father to send the Holy Spirit onto the bread and wine, but the earlier forms seem to have been different, calling for the Second Person,[29] the Logos, to change the bread and wine. In Egypt in the middle of the fourth century, Bishop Sarapion prayed: 'O God of truth, let thy holy Word come upon this bread [*epidemesato,* literally 'dwell'].'[30] The *Liturgy of Addai and Mari* is a problem; although acknowledged as important evidence for early practice, there is no agreement on the original form of the prayers.[31] Dix's reconstruction offers a prayer addressed to the Second Person, the

LORD who 'put on our manhood': 'May there come O my LORD, thy Holy Spirit and rest upon this oblation of thy Servants.' Later prayers speak of the Spirit being 'sent', but these examples of early practice imply that the divinity addressed 'came' to the bread and wine. There is some confusion in the earliest texts because they can call the Second Person either Word or Spirit, as did Philo for whom the Word and Wisdom were equivalents.[32] Possibly the earliest evidence of all, apart from the New Testament, is the *Didache,* which concludes with the '*Maranatha*', praying for the LORD to come.

Given the temple and priestly context of Basil's other 'unwritten' traditions, it is likely that the *epiklesis* also originated there, in the prayers for the LORD to 'come' to the temple. The tabernacle had originally been built so that the LORD could 'dwell' there (Exod. 25. 8; LXX 'appear') and could speak to Moses from between the cherubim on the ark (Exod. 25.22). When the tabernacle was completed, the Glory of the LORD *came* to fill the tabernacle (Exod. 40.34), as it also *came* to fill the newly built temple (1 Kgs 8.11). Ezekiel later saw the Glory leaving the polluted temple (Ezek. 11.23). Isaiah had seen the LORD enthroned in the temple (Isa. 6); and the Third Isaiah prayed that the LORD would rend the heavens and *come* down (Isa. 64.1).[33] When David brought the ark to Jerusalem, he appointed certain Levites to praise, thank and invoke, *l'hazkiyr,* the LORD (1 Chron. 16.4). Several passages in later Jewish mystical texts, the Merkavah texts, have suggested to scholars that drawing the LORD or the Shekinah down into the temple was a major element of the temple service. Moshe Idel concluded: 'We can seriously consider the possibility that temple service was conceived as inducing the presence of the Shekinah in the holy of holies.'[34] So where might the *Maranatha* prayer have originated? And whose presence was there with the Bread of the Presence?

The rituals performed in the holy of holies are still as veiled as they ever were, but we can glimpse their original setting. The tabernacle/temple replicated the days of the creation.[35] Moses began to erect it on the first day of the year, and each stage corresponded to one of the days of creation (Exod. 40.16–33). The veil corresponded to the firmament set in place on the second day, to separate what was above from what was below. Everything beyond the veil corresponded to Day One, beyond the visible world and beyond time.[36] The creation of the angels on Day One (*Jubilees* 2.2) was a sensitive issue, as were their names, and so the subjects prohibited by the Mishnah -- the story of the creation, the chapter of the chariot, what is above, beneath, before and hereafter (*m. Ḥagigah* 2.1) – were in fact the secrets of the holy of holies which the priests had to guard.[37] (It is significant that Narsai has exactly the same interpretation for the apse of a church, the setting for the Eucharist: 'It typifies things below and above; it calls to mind the things that have been, and those that are to be it typifies spiritually', *Homily*

XVIIA.) The rituals of the holy of holies were thus taking place outside time and matter, in the realm of the angels and the heavenly throne, and those who functioned in the holy of holies were more than human, being and seeing beyond time. The priests were the angels and the high priest was the chief of the angels, the LORD of Hosts.

The royal rituals in the holy of holies, beyond time, are the setting of the Eucharist, although it is not clear how the various parts of the originals fitted together. Psalm 110 (LXX 109), is obscure (perhaps obscured) in the Hebrew, but the Greek describes how the king is born as the divine son in the glory of the holy ones, i.e. in the holy of holies, and declared to be the Melchizedek priest. This must have been the original setting for Isaiah 9. 6–7: 'Unto us [the angels] a child is born ... and the government shall be on his shoulder, and his name shall be called ...' There follow in the Hebrew the four throne names, but in the Greek there is just one title, The Angel of Great Counsel. This 'birth' in the holy of holies changed the human into an angel and gave him great Wisdom. The last words of David describe him as one through whom the Spirit of the LORD has spoken, a man who was anointed and raised up (*qwm, anestesan kurios*), a word that could also be translated 'resurrected' (2 Sam. 23.1). This is how it seems to have been understood at the end of the second temple period, because the Letter to the Hebrews contrasts the Levitical priests and Melchizedek: the former have their position due to descent from Levi, but Melchizedek has been *raised up* [anistatai] *with the power of indestructible life* (Heb. 7.15–16). The Chronicler's account of Solomon's enthronement says that he sat on the throne of the LORD as King, and the people worshipped the LORD and the King (1 Chron. 29.20–23).[38] In the holy of holies, then, a man had been resurrected and enthroned, and was then worshipped by his people as God and King. That the Davidic monarchs had indeed become 'God and King' in the holy of holies, and that this had not been forgotten, is confirmed by Philo's extraordinary statement about Moses: he became God and King when he entered the darkness where God was (*Moses* 1.158). In his vision, Ezekiel had seen this divine and human figure enthroned, the glory of the LORD in human form wreathed in a rainbow (Ezek. 1.26–28), and the later account of the tabernacle in Exodus 25 remembered the king on his cherub throne as the voice of the LORD above the *kapporet*, between the cherubim (Exod. 25.22). 'God and King' is the phrase used to describe the transformed human; it is also used in the Liturgy.

The holy of holies was the place of the light of Day One, which preceded the light of the visible creation. In the temple this was in fact the darkness of the divine presence in the holy of holies. Texts which speak of what happened before the world was created, or what happened in eternity, are describing rituals in the holy of holies, presumably the secrets from beyond the curtain, which Jesus the great

high priest is said to have taught (e.g. Clement, *Miscellanies* 6.7; 7.17; Origen, *Celsus* 3.37: 'Jesus beheld these weighty secrets and made them known to a few'; Origen, *On Matthew* 17.2 '... the mystery established before the ages'). Thus Psalm 110 is telling us that the divine son was 'born' and enthroned in eternity. When Enoch says that the Son of Man was named in the presence of the LORD of Spirits, before the sun and signs were created, it indicates a naming ritual in the holy of holies, most likely when the human figure was given the Sacred Name (*1 En.* 48.2–3).[39] Then he was enthroned, and for his people he was Immanuel, God With Us. Philippians 2.6–11 shows that the sequence of this ritual was used to set the death of Jesus in one particular context. The Servant has been exalted and given the Name because he accepted death. He nevertheless reigns in heaven and receives homage whilst enthroned. In other words, the one who bears the Name is resurrected, just as David had claimed in his 'last words', and just as the writer to the Hebrews claimed for Melchizedek. There is a similar pattern in Daniel 7, where the human figure goes with clouds – the clouds of incense with which the human figure entered the holy of holies – and is offered (*haqrʿbuhiy*) before the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7.13).[40] He is then enthroned and given the kingdom of eternity. A similar sequence also appears in the second parable of Enoch, where the Man figure goes to the Head of Days and the blood of the Righteous One is offered (*1 En.* 47.1).[41]

The LORD was enthroned on the *kapporet* over the ark, the place of atonement. Ark and throne are the same symbol. (The oldest known Targum to Leviticus, found at Qumran (4Q156), translates *kapporet* by ksy', which in Hebrew means 'throne', whereas the later Targums all keep *kapporet*.)The ascent of the human figure in Enoch's parable was associated with the offering of blood before the throne, which must have been the offering on the Day of Atonement. What, then, happened on the Day of Atonement? This was one of the issues on which Israel had gone astray, according to the *Damascus Document*. It used to be said that the ritual prescribed in Leviticus 16 was a relatively late addition to the lore of the temple, but scholars are now moving towards the view that this was one of the most ancient practices,[42] and so, if Robertson Smith was correct, likely to have lost its original significance in the second temple. Few details are given in Leviticus, although the shape of the ritual is clear enough; it was outwards from the holy of holies. The high priest took blood into the holy of holies and *as he emerged,* he sprinkled certain parts of the temple 'to cleanse it and hallow it from all the uncleannesses [*ṭum'ot*] of the people of Israel' (Lev. 16.19). He entered the holy place in great fear, because the LORD would appear to him over the *kapporet* (Lev. 16.2). Since the temple was a microcosm of the whole creation, atonement was a ritual to cleanse and renew the creation at the beginning of the year. The Mishnah gives more detail of where the blood was sprinkled, and adds that what was

left was poured out at the base of the altar (*m. Yoma* 5.4–6, hence the souls of the martyrs under the altar, part of the great atonement, Rev. 6.9). The high priest also prayed when he was in the temple, but what he said is not recorded. Only the words used outside the temple appear in the Mishnah.

The Renewal

The meaning of atonement, what the high priest was 'doing' when he took blood into the holy of holies, has to be pieced together from many sources. Certainty is impossible, and so what follows is a hypothesis consistent with the evidence. According to Numbers 25.6ff., the family of Aaron was given the 'covenant of eternal priesthood' because Phineas had been zealous to preserve the covenant. Atonement was acting to protect the covenant of peace, elsewhere described as 'the eternal covenant' or 'the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature' (Gen. 9.16). Isaiah described how the pollution of human sin caused the covenant to collapse (Isa. 24.4–6) with heaven and earth withering away. Atonement renewed it. Aaron protected the people from the consequences of breaking the covenant, by burning incense: 'Take your censer ... and make atonement for them ... for wrath has gone forth from the LORD' (Num. 17.46, English numbering).[43] More commonly, as on the Day of Atonement, atonement was effected by blood: 'I have given blood for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls ...' (Lev. 17.11). Blood renewed the eternal covenant which had been destroyed by human sin. Since the temple was the microcosm of the creation, the temple ritual to renew the covenant also renewed the creation. Hence the famous words attributed to the high priest Simeon the Just: 'By three things is the world sustained: by the Law, by the temple service and by deeds of loving kindness' (*m. Aboth* 1.2). On the Day of Atonement the eternal covenant was renewed, and blood was sprinkled and smeared, to remove the effects of sin and to heal.[44] The blood was brought out from the holy of holies; in temple symbolism, this was new life brought from heaven to renew the earth and to restore the community of all creation which had been broken by sin.

But whose life effected this renewal? Two goats were necessary for the Day of Atonement rituals, and the customary rendering of Leviticus 16.8 is that one goat was '*for* the LORD' and the other goat '*for* Azazel'. This way of reading the text has caused many problems, not least why an offering was being sent to Azazel. One line in Origen's *Contra Celsum* may provide vital evidence here. He says that the goat sent into the desert 'was Azazel',[45] meaning, presumably *represented* Azzel. If this was correct, then the other goat, the sacrificed goat, must have represented the LORD. The *l* meant '*as* the LORD' not '*for* the LORD', and Israel did not, after all, make an offering to Azazel. The blood

which renewed the creation was new life from the LORD. Since the high priest himself represented the LORD, wearing the Sacred Name on his forehead, we have here a ritual in which the LORD was both the high priest and the victim in the act of atonement, another eucharistic image. The argument in the Letter to the Hebrews implies that the older practice of substitution had been superseded, and that the annual rite was no longer necessary: 'When Christ appeared as a high priest ... he entered once for all into the holy place, taking not the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption' (Heb. 9.11–12).

The high priest had entered heaven with the blood of the great atonement, and the origin of the Parousia expectation was that he would emerge again from the holy of holies to complete the atonement and renewal of the creation. Hence Peter's speech in Solomon's portico:

> Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the LORD, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets ...' (Acts 3.12–23)

Hence, too, Caiaphas' sarcasm as he justified the killing of Jesus: 'It is expedient that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish', and the evangelist's comment: 'He prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad' (John 11.50–52). This was the established expectation, based on the pattern of the New Year festivals: the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement and the ingathering of Tabernacles.[46]

Matthew's account of the Last Supper depicts Jesus renewing the eternal covenant (Matt. 26.26–8). As the great high priest it was his own blood that would renew the covenant and put away sins. None of the other covenants described in the Hebrew Scriptures concerns putting away sin.[47] Hence when the 'Last Supper' was repeated in early worship, they prayed for the return of the high priest to complete the great atonement: '*Maranatha*'. As time passed and the Parousia hope faded, the significance of the original *epiklesis* changed, and what had begun as a temple ritual fulfilled in history, returned to being a ritual. One of the roots of the Eucharist lies in the Day of Atonement, understood as the renewal of the creation, and this, as we shall see, passed into the words of the Liturgies. This was the 'comprehensive cosmic reconciliation' which Dillistone could not find in Hebrew thought.

It was, however, known to Gregory of Nyssa[48] and he too linked it to the autumn festivals. Interpreting Psalm 118.27, the Tabernacles Psalm, he said that the appearance of the LORD had been to restore the

original unity of all creation. The whole creation was the temple of the Creator, and once sin had come in, the mouths of those who had offered praise (in that temple) had been closed, and the voice of praise was silenced. The symphony of celebration was interrupted, since the human creation did not join with those above. People excluded by sin rejoined the assembly in the great festival which was the liturgy of heaven and earth, the re-uniting of humans and angels. All were joined together again through the resurrection of the Feast of Tabernacles. There would be one feast which joined together the lower creation and those above, and they would form one assembly in a choral dance together, *sunchoreuonton*, singing together as they had formerly done. This is exactly the meaning of the new year feasts: the removal of sin and rededication, the cleansing of the temple as the renewal of the creation and the community, and the appearance of the king. (This was Gregory's theme for his *Christmas* Sermon.) This is also how the Feast of Tabernacles is described in the Mishnah, a festival of processions in which the music of flutes was an important feature.[49] The pilgrims went each day around the altar, singing Psalm 118.27 and carrying branches of willow. On the seventh and final day, they processed around the altar seven times.[50] This image of Tabernacles occurs also in Hebrews 12.22–24, the heavenly assembly of humans and angels after Jesus has renewed the covenant and sprinkled the blood, and it was the scheme for the entire Book of Revelation. The baptized were assembled (Rev. 7), in preparation for the high priest emerging from heaven (Rev. 8–9). He came (Rev. 10), and then brought his judgement on the wicked city of Jerusalem and restored the whole creation. The great Tabernacles culminates with all the baptized worshipping in the holy of holies where the LORD is the light, i.e. with the angels of Day One (Rev. 22). Daniélou suggested that Gregory's interpretation of Tabernacles was 'une théologie strictement origéniste',[51] but this is not so. It was the ancient temple tradition of the renewal of the eternal covenant at the new year, and Gregory knew not only the detail of how the feast had been celebrated but what the celebration signified.

In the Eucharist there are other echoes of the atonement rituals in the temple. When the priest prepares the bread of the sacrifice, he removes the central portion which is later used for the Communion. An exactly similar procedure was used for the sin offering, according to the *Letter of Barnabas* 7. Quoting from an otherwise unknown prophet, he wrote: 'Let them eat of the goat offered for their sins at the fast [i.e. the Day of Atonement], and let all the priests but nobody else, eat its inward parts, unwashed and with sour wine' (*Barn.* 7). This is different from the regulations in Leviticus, where the central portion of a sin offering has to be removed and burned (e.g. Lev. 4.8–10). Of the pair of goats used in the Day of Atonement ritual, the sacrificed goat was also known as the sin offering (Lev. 16.25) and its central portion also had to be

burned. Barnabas, described as a Levite from Cyprus (Acts 4.36), says that it was this goat of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement whose inner parts were consumed raw with sour wine. Something similar, however, appears in the Mishnah. If the Day of Atonement fell on a Friday, the goat of the Atonement was consumed at evening, i.e. after the fast. The Babylonians, possibly an abusive term for the Alexandrians, used to eat it raw, presumably because they could not cook on the Sabbath.[52] Barnabas linked this mixing of the unwashed (and therefore both bloody and uncooked) inner parts with sour wine to the incident reported in the Gospels (Matt. 27.48; Mk.15.36; John 19.30), that Jesus drank some sour wine just before he died.

The *Letter of Barnabas* offers a glimpse of a very early Christian community, when the Jews were attempting to rebuild the temple after their revolt against Rome (*Barn.* 10). He quotes what appear to be otherwise unknown words of Jesus, perhaps a fragment of an early Christian liturgy celebrated on the Day of Atonement:

> When I am about to offer my body for the sins of this new people of mine, you will be giving me gall and sour wine to drink. That is why you shall be the only ones to eat, while the people of Israel are fasting and lamenting in sackcloth and ashes.

Whether or not Barnabas is a genuine text from the Apostolic age,[53] it shows how early the relationship between the Eucharist and the Day of Atonement was believed to be. It would be pressing coincidence too far to suggest that the central portion of the sacrifice, the holiest part which was mixed with sour wine, was unrelated to the practice of mixing the bread and the wine in the chalice. Barnabas' evidence also shows that blood was consumed in temple ritual, something often presented as an insuperable barrier to seeking the roots of eucharistic practice in the temple.

One root of the Eucharist must lie in the Day of Atonement, when the high priest, who was the LORD, entered 'heaven' carrying blood which represented the life of the LORD. It was sprinkled on the ark, the 'throne', and then brought out into the visible world to renew the eternal covenant and restore the creation. The ritual represented and anticipated the Day of the LORD, when he would judge those on earth, banish evil and establish his kingdom. A key text was Deuteronomy 32.43: the LORD emerging from heaven to judge his enemies and atone the land.[54] The Day of Atonement is the only possible source of the 'both high priest and victim' belief associated with the Eucharist.[55] Thus Narsai (*Homily* XVIIA, late fifth century): 'The priest ... celebrating this sacrifice, bears in himself the image of our LORD in that hour'. Origen interpreted the Eucharist as the Day of Atonement offering: 'Christ the true high priest who made atonement for you ... hear him saying to you: "This is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins" ' (*On Leviticus* 9). Justin, who could well have been a

younger contemporary of Barnabas, knew that the sacrificed goat prefigured the Parousia, the Second Coming (*Trypho* 40), in other words, that the blood of that goat emerging from the holy of holies 'was' the return of the LORD. Origen, explaining the 'hidden' meaning of the Day of Atonement to Christians who must still have observed Jewish customs, said:

> All of you who keep the Jewish fast so that you do not understand the Day of Atonement as that which is in accord with the coming of Jesus Christ, you do not hear the atonement in a hidden way but only outwardly. For to hear the atonement in a hidden way is to hear how God put forward Jesus as the atonement for our sins, and that he is an atonement for our sins and not for our sins alone but also for the whole world. (*On Jeremiah*, Homily 12.13.2)

Cyril of Alexandria wrote: 'We must perceive the Immanuel in the slaughtered goat ... the two goats illustrate the mystery' (*Letter* 41). The king, God-with-us, was known by him to be the central figure on the Day of Atonement. Bishop Sarapion's Eucharist, too, was the Day of Atonement; he prayed for 'the medicine of life ... and not condemnation'. He prayed for angels to come and destroy the evil one and establish the Church, in other words, for the banishing of Azazel and the establishing of the Kingdom.

The Bread of the Presence

The Eucharist is not an annual celebration like the Day of Atonement, and so another root may lie in the other high priestly ritual, eating the 'Bread of the Presence' which was placed in the temple each Sabbath.[56] Twelve loaves made from fine flour were set out in the temple every Sabbath on a table of gold, and incense was set with them.[57] It was described as a most holy portion for the high priests (Aaron and his sons, Lev. 24.9), to be eaten in a holy place on the Sabbath. As with the other temple furnishings and rituals, nothing is said about meaning, and we have to guess. Even the manner of preparing the Bread of the Presence was never revealed: it was the hereditary duty of the house of Garmu and they kept their secret (*m. Yoma* 3.11). The huge amount of detail in the Mishnah and the Talmud concerns how the bread was placed in the temple, what shape it was, and how it was balanced on the table. It is clear that the shape and the meaning of the bread were not known, *or could not be disclosed.*

First, the bread was spread (Lev. 24.7) on a table in the temple,[58] the only cereal offering to be taken inside. The Mishnah records that there were two tables in the porch outside the temple: 'On the table of marble they laid the Bread of the Presence when it was brought in, and on the table of gold they laid it when it was brought out, since what is holy must be raised and not brought down' (m. Menaḥoth 11.7).[59] In

other words, the bread had acquired holiness whilst it was in the temple, and could no longer be placed on the marble table. The bread which had been in the temple was classed as 'most holy' (Lev. 24.9), and would have imparted holiness to the men who consumed it.[60] Items described as 'most holy' were deemed to impart holiness, for example, the altar (Exod. 29.37), its vessels (Exod. 30.29), and the cereal offering eaten in the holy place (Lev. 6.17–18, English numbering). Others who even came near the most holy things were in danger of death (Num. 4.19). The priests who ate the goat of the sin offering, also described as most holy, were enabled thereby to bear the iniquity of the congregation and thus make atonement for them (Lev. 10.17). When Aaron wore the Name of the LORD on his forehead, he was empowered to bear the 'guilt' of the offerings (Exod. 28.38).[61] Those who ate the Bread of the Presence must have acquired some power.

All the cereal offerings had a special significance, although the details are now lost. In a recent study, Alfred Marx[62] has suggested that the cereal offerings and the blood offerings were two parallel systems of sacrifice, combined in the Priestly writings during or after the exile. *The cereal offerings took precedence* and were mentioned first. They were ranked with the sin offering *ḥaṭṭ'ah* and the guilt offering *'ašam*, and appeared at the head of the list (Num. 18.9; Ezek. 44.29). They had to be stored and eaten in the holy chambers within the temple court (Ezek. 42.13). The Bread of the Presence, like the other cereal offerings, was described as an *'azkarah*, although exactly how this was understood is not clear. The word is usually translated 'memorial offering', but 'invocation offering' is another possibility.[63] The titles of Psalms 38 and 70 are both *l'hazkiyr*, translated 'for the memorial offering' (RSV), or 'to bring to remembrance' (AV), but the subject matter of those psalms suggests that 'invocation' was the more likely intention. 'Make haste to help me' (Ps. 38.22) and 'Hasten to me O God' (Ps. 70.5) both suggest 'invocation' rather than remembrance. The LXX Ps. 37 renders the title *eis anamnesin peri sabbatou*, showing that one of the key words in the New Testament account of the Eucharist, *anamnesis*, 'remembrance' (Luke 22.19; 1 Cor. 11.24) was the translation used for this *'azkarah* offering. Perhaps the Bread of the Presence on the Sabbath was the context for Psalm 38.

The text of Leviticus 24.7 implies that the incense on the table was the *'azkarah*, but the Targums[64] here imply that the bread itself was the *'azkarah* before the LORD. If *'azkarah* is to be understood here as 'invocation', and the Name had been invoked over the bread,[65] this would explain the extreme holiness of the bread of the Presence. It would also explain why, when the desert tabernacle was moved, the ark and the table of the Bread of the Presence were the only items to have three covers (Num. 4.5–8). The lamp, the incense altar and the other sanctuary vessels were wrapped in a blue cloth and a leather

cover, but in addition to these, the ark was first covered by the veil, and the table by a scarlet covering. T. Onkelos Leviticus 24.5–9 describes the Bread of the Presence as the most sacred of the offerings, *showing that the special nature of this bread was known to the Targumist, i.e. in the Christian era.*

There is also the question of the bread described in Leviticus 21, a chapter dealing with the special holiness of the sons of Aaron, the high priests. The high priest, upon whom was the crown of the anointing oil of his God (Lev. 21.12, translating literally), offered 'the bread of their God' (Lev. 21.6) or 'the bread of your God' (Lev. 21.8), and this was the reason why he had to be especially pure. This bread is not described as an offering *to* God, but as the bread *of* God.

The bread in the temple was an eternal covenant, *bryt 'lm* (Lev. 24.8), and the command that Aaron and his sons had to eat it was an eternal statute, *ḥoq 'lm* (Lev. 24.9). The regulations in Leviticus are brief and enigmatic. The Sabbath itself was described as an eternal covenant, marking the completion of the creation (Exod. 31.16), and another sign of the eternal covenant was the rainbow: 'and when the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature' (Gen. 9.16). One possibility is that the bread set before the LORD each Sabbath, the day when the creation was completed, *was a memorial of the eternal covenant.* The cult of the second temple was described as placing impure bread on the table before the holy of holies ('the tower', *1 En.* 89.73). Malachi warned the priests that they had despised the Name of the LORD, because by offering polluted bread they had polluted *him.* 'Seek the presence/face of God and he will be gracious to us. With such a gift he will not lift up his presence/face upon you' (Mal. 1.7–9, translating the Hebrew text literally). The Bread of the Presence had become polluted at the beginning of the second temple period and could no longer function. The implication is that it could no longer be the vehicle of the LORD's presence, because with polluted bread the LORD could not be present. The oracle which follows became the prophecy used by the Church to describe the Eucharist: 'From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name is great among the nations and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering' (Mal. 1.11). The Bread of the Presence had been an offering with incense, and the Christian context implies that the Eucharist was the new Bread of the Presence (e.g. Justin, *Trypho* 41), the new bread of the eternal covenant (*Didache* 14).

If the Bread of the Presence had similarly been a sign of the eternal covenant, the term *leḥem panim*, bread of face/presence, must have meant more than just 'bread put out before the LORD', which is how it is often understood. There are several places in the Hebrew Scriptures where *panim* was used as a circumlocution for the LORD himself, as can be seen from the LXX. Thus 'My presence will go with you' (Exod.

33.14) was translated in the Greek as 'I myself will go [*autos*]' and Moses' response, 'If your presence will not go with me ...' became 'If you yourself [*autos*] do not go with me ...'; 'He brought you out of Egypt with his own presence' (Deut. 4.37) became 'He himself [*autos*] led you out'. 'The Angel of his Presence saved them' (Isa. 63.9) became 'Not an ambassador nor an angel, but he himself saved them'.[66] This latter is emphatic; the angel of the Presence was the LORD himself. Perhaps this is how the 'Bread of Presence' should be understood. It was the bread of the LORD. Such an understanding would certainly account for the lines in Malachi, that the LORD could not be present with polluted bread. It would explain the great holiness of the Bread of the Presence and the special status of the table on which it rested,[67] and would add weight to the suggestion that *'azkarah* was an invocation rather than a memorial.[68]

So much information about the temple has disappeared and has to be reconstructed from allusions elsewhere. There were, for example, libation vessels kept on the Bread of the Presence table (Exod. 25.29, cf. 1 Kgs 7.50), but there is no record of how these were used in the temple.[69] There had at one time been meals in the temple; the elders who saw the God of Israel on Sinai and ate and drank in safety before him is an encoded reference to this (Exod. 24.11). So too, perhaps, Psalm 23: the table set before the anointed one, who would dwell in the house of the LORD forever, and the belief that the ruler in Israel would come forth from the House of bread, *beth leḥem* (Mic. 5.2). For the rest, we look in the shadows and listen for echoes. In the *Midrash Rabbah* we find: 'Melchizedek instructed Abraham in the laws of the priesthood, the bread alluding to the Bread of the Presence and the wine to libations' (*Gen. Rab.* XLIII.6). 'The House of Wisdom is the tabernacle, and Wisdom's table is Bread of the Presence and wine' (*Lev. Rab.* XI.9). 'In this world you offer before me Bread of the Presence and sacrifices, but in the world to come I shall prepare for you a great table' (followed by a reference to Ps. 23, *Num. Rab.* XXI.21).[70] A gloss in T. Neofiti to Exodus 25.29–30 says that the vials of anointing oil were also kept on the table.[71]

Another mystery is the investiture described in the *Testament of Levi*. Levi saw seven angels giving him the insignia of high priesthood and he described the ritual: he was anointed, washed with water and then fed bread and wine, 'the most holy things',[72] before eventually receiving the incense (*T. Levi* 8.1–10). Since the most holy bread reserved for Aaron and his sons was the Bread of the Presence (Lev. 24.5–9), this is probably what Levi received from the angels in his vision, and he received it with wine. These rituals bear some resemblance to the ordination rituals in Leviticus 8 in so far as both texts describe washing, vesting, crowning and anointing, but there is nothing in the *Testament of Levi* about smearing blood and eating the boiled flesh of the offerings;

instead, there is bread and wine. Did the *Testament of Levi* recall the older ritual, the Melchizedek ritual, which involved the bread and wine? This would be consistent with the implications of the papyri from Elephantine, that an earlier cult had not offered animal sacrifices. And if this is so, who had preserved this knowledge since the destruction of the first temple?[73]

Wisdom's Table

Those papyri found at Elephantine offer a glimpse of a Jewish community in the fifth century BCE. The colony in the south of Egypt had had a temple since 525 BCE and this temple had been burned and looted in 411 BCE by the Egyptians, who objected to blood sacrifices there because their god was a ram god. When permission came from the governor to rebuild the temple, only meal offerings and incense were to be allowed (*Pap.* 32). Another papyrus states that no sheep, bulls or goats were to be sacrificed there, only meal, incense and drink offerings (*Pap.* 33). What does this imply? There had been a temple there for more than a century, with apparently no objections to its practices. Shortly after an edict from Darius in 419 BCE (*Pap.* 21) ordering Passover (?) to be observed, there were riots protesting at animal sacrifices and the temple was destroyed. One construction on this evidence could be that the 'Jews' had not offered animal sacrifice until the Passover-type of religion had been commanded, i.e. the Moses and Aaron religion with which we are familiar. They had offered only cereals, libations and incense. This accords with the picture of the refugees who fled to Egypt and argued with Jeremiah about their traditional offerings for the Queen of Heaven, described as 'incense, libations and cakes to represent her' (Jer. 44.19). Is it possible, then, that the Elephantine colony brought with them to Egypt from Jerusalem and Judah an older form of religion, which did not offer animal sacrifice? Melchizedek?

The Queen of Heaven was remembered as Wisdom by people who shared the history recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, but told it differently. The Enochic *Apocalypse of Weeks*, which summarizes the history of Israel without mentioning the Exodus and so is free of any Moses/Aaron/Deuteronomy influences, describes thus the changes in the time of Josiah, when the refugees in Egypt claimed that the Queen had been abandoned: 'In the sixth week all who live in it [the temple] shall become blind and the hearts of all of them shall godlessly forsake Wisdom' (*1 En.* 93.8). Wisdom's first gift had been the vision which was eternal life, and this loss of vision was remembered as the significant change at the end of the first temple period. Wisdom was forsaken and vision was lost.[74]

Wisdom and her house is another recurring theme with the Bread of the Presence This suggests it was an element in the cult of the first

temple, where Melchizedek had been high priest, and Wisdom the Queen of Heaven, the patroness of Jerusalem.[75] The importance of the Bread of the Presence in that cult may account for the later silence in 'official texts' and the consistent echoes elsewhere. The offerings to the Queen had been 'cakes', libations and incense (Jer. 44.18–19, cf. 7.18), and the refugees in Egypt, after 586 BCE, reminded Jeremiah that this cult had been abandoned with disastrous consequences for Jerusalem. These offerings are described as cakes 'to portray' or 'to depict' her, *l'ha"ṣibah*, (whence the word for an idol, *'eṣeb)*. Moulds have been found elsewhere that are thought to be the pans for baking such shaped bread,[76] and, irrespective of what image was imprinted on them, the cakes offered in Judah and Jerusalem were intended to depict the Queen. The Bread of the Presence was also baked in a special mould, although nobody seemed to remember what this mould was (*b. Menaḥoth* 94ab), one of the meanings suggested for the term *leḥem panim*, literally bread of faces, was that it had faces (*b. Menaḥoth* 96a). Shaped loaves were offered to female divinities elsewhere;[77] but it would be wrong to assume that this was an unfortunate import into the religion of Judah and Jerusalem, and that the goddess must have been known by a foreign name such as Ishtar.[78]

The special 'loaves' used to represent her were known as *kauwanim* (Jer. 7.18; 44.19), an otherwise unknown word, which the LXX simply transliterated *chauonas* (Jer. 7.18; 51.19). The favoured explanation is that the word derives from the Akkadian *kamanu* and means a baked loaf or cake,[79] presumably on the grounds that *kauwanim* were made from kneaded and baked dough (Jer. 7.18). It may be, however, that *kauwan* was a technical term from the cult and meant something more specific than 'loaf'. Centuries later, a very similar word appears as a technical term in the writings of the Kabbalists. *Kauwanah* meant the mystical intention which accompanied a ritual act, like a soul to a body. It was 'a mystical instrument ... by means of which every ritual action was transformed into a mystery rite performed by the initiate'. It was part of the process by which the soul was joined to God. Scholem, describing contemporary practice, wrote: 'None ... would deny that the inner *kauwanah* of prayer is easily capable of being externalised as magic ... [but] the *kauwanah* to them is also the way to *devekuth*, the mystical contact with God which ... is the typical form of *unio mystica* in Kabbalism.'[80]

Had this been the meaning of the *kauwan* prepared for the cult of the Queen, we should have a context for such sayings as Wisdom's promise: 'Those who eat me will hunger for more' (*Ben Sira* 24.21). Ben Sira also promised the man who had Wisdom that she would meet him like a mother and welcome him like a wife, feeding him with the bread of understanding and the water of wisdom (*Ben Sira* 15.2–3). We know from elsewhere that the gift of Wisdom brought eternal life (e.g.

Wisdom 8.13). Wisdom, the Queen of Heaven, invited devotees to her table (Prov. 9.5), and although the poem in Proverbs 9 is much interpolated, it is still clear that Wisdom offers the bread and wine of her table to those who seek the way of insight (Prov. 9.5–6).[81]

What might have been said to those who consumed the bread which represented the Queen? 'Take, eat, I am giving myself to you' perhaps?[82] When the Bread of the Presence was brought out of the temple, the accompanying incense was burned with the daily whole offering, and then the bread was divided and each priest took a piece. The remainder was taken out to the priests who were blemished and unable to enter the court of the priests (*j. Menaḥoth* 11). It is interesting that from the earliest days of the Church, the eucharistic elements have been taken by the deacons to those who were unable to be present at the celebration (Justin, *Trypho* 67). And what might have been said to those priests who consumed the Bread of the Presence and acquired power and holiness as a result? That this was bread from heaven which gave heavenly life? Or even that this was the bread of God which came from heaven to give life? Both these phrases are used in the Fourth Gospel when John's Jesus contrasts the manna and the bread which he offers (John 6). A recent writer on Liturgy suggested something remarkably similar to these hypothetical words for the distribution of the Bread of the Presence. 'In the short text of Luke's Last Supper, the eucharistic word of Jesus is given only to the bread, "This is my body". What Jesus is saying in this logion is, "This is myself which I am giving to you." The bread becomes the vehicle of Jesus' presence',[83] and yet Clement of Rome could write to the Corinthians that they were permitted to 'taste the Wisdom of Eternity' (1 Clem. 36). Recall the prayers of Bishop Sarapion, that his people would become 'living', i.e. resurrected: 'Make us wise by the participation of the body and the blood.'

It has long been recognized that the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus as Wisdom,[84] and that in the post-Deuteronomic scheme, Torah was offered as a replacement for Wisdom. Thus, in the Fourth Gospel, when Jesus offers himself as the bread from heaven, in contrast to the manna which was the heavenly bread offered by Moses; this should be understood as a return to the heavenly bread by which Wisdom offered herself to her devotees and gave them eternal life. Cyril of Alexandria (died 444 CE), in his *Commentary on John* 4.2 said that manna was the shadow of the bread to come, the bread of angels which was spiritual and of Wisdom. This bread gave life. He then explained how the Saviour was 'pre-typified as Bread by the Law, and the Apostles again as cakes by their likeness to him'. The twelve loaves of the Bread of the Presence were the twelve disciples surrounding their Master, and as the Bread of the Presence was the Sabbath bread, so too the bread is the food of the last times in the world. Cyril returns to this theme later,

explaining that Christ is co-figured by the Menorah and the Bread of the Presence in the tabernacle. Although the Bread of the Presence was food for the priests, when David took it to feed his men (1 Sam. 21.6), he pre-figured its being given to others too (cf. Luke 6.12–15 where Jesus mentions the same story).

Recall too the words of the *Damascus Document*, that a remnant had kept the true ways when Israel had gone astray over the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement. The temple ritual for the Sabbath was the renewal of the Bread of the Presence, a high priestly ritual, and the Day of Atonement was the major high priestly ritual. There is a conspicuous silence about both of these in the surviving sources, but such fragments as can be recovered correspond to elements in Christian ritual, to liturgies and related writings, and even, at a later period, to church architecture and to the way of preparing the bread. In the eighth century, Germanus of Constantinople in his *On the Divine Liturgy* was able to show exact correspondences between church and temple practice. This may have been a conscious imitation of the temple at a later stage,[85] rather than an unbroken tradition from earliest times. Such a sceptical position, however, has to explain away the earlier references to temple tradition and symbolism, and to account for the expert knowledge not only of the temple, but of the first temple traditions, which had been the cause of controversy at the end of the second temple period. It is more likely that the temple tradition in Christian Liturgy came through from the time when these were still living issues,[86] and gave rise to the original claim that Jesus was the Melchizedek high priest. The high priest was the twofold incarnation of the LORD. The God of Israel took two forms, male and female, and the high priest was the human manifestation of both. Hence Jesus was described as Christ, 'the power of God and the Wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1.24). Jesus is depicted as taking the great rituals of each aspect of the God of Israel: the atonement blood of the LORD and the Bread of the Presence of Wisdom, and combining them into his own ritual.[87] It is more likely that this inspiration was from Jesus himself rather than from the liturgy makers of the early Church.[88]

Now for some comparisons. The Bread of the Presence was associated with Wisdom and her invitation: 'Those who eat me will hunger for more' (*Ben Sira* 24.21), and with Melchizedek the resurrected high priest. The Bread of the Presence was originally eaten every Sabbath by the high priests who wore the Sacred Name,[89] and it was their most holy food. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote that the Bread of Heaven had replaced the Bread of the Presence (*Catecheses* 22.5). One of the mysterious ikons of the Holy Wisdom depicts her enthroned over the apostles celebrating the Eucharist, whilst Jesus and Mary stand beneath her.[90] Eusebius wrote: 'Our Saviour Jesus, the Christ of God, even now today performs through his ministers sacrifices after the

manner of Melchizedek' (*Proof* 5.3). In the *Didache* they gave thanks over the bread for 'life and knowledge', and after partaking, gave thanks for the Sacred Name dwelling in their hearts, knowledge, faith and immortality (*Didache* 9–10).[91] These could well have been the thanks of the high priests when they had eaten the Bread of the Presence. Bishop Sarapion prayed: 'Make us wise by the participation of the body and the blood.' The prothesis prayer of the Coptic Jacobites preserves the Bread of the Presence tradition: 'LORD Jesus Christ ... the living bread which came down from heaven ... make thy face shine upon this bread and upon this cup which we have set upon thy priestly table.' Perhaps the words which Luke and Paul (Luke 22.19; 1 Cor. 11.24) attributed to Jesus: 'Do this in remembrance of me', were originally 'Do this as my *'azkarah'*, my invocation, and the bread was the new Bread of the Presence, the sign of his presence, *'Maranatha'*.[92] Leviticus 24.7 *l'azkarah* became in the LXX *eis anamnesin*, the words used by Luke and Paul (Luke 22.19;1 Cor. 11.24). The two possible meanings for this word could explain the divided tradition: 'in memory of me' or 'to invoke me'.

Epiphanius described how women in Arabia offered a small loaf of bread[93] to Mary, and he linked it to the offerings to the Queen of Heaven described in Jeremiah. Dismissing the whole thing as ridiculous, he described a group of women who, on a certain day of the year 'decorate a chair or square stool, spread out upon it a cloth ... put out bread and offer it in Mary's name. All the women partake of the bread.' The criticism which follows implies that this ritual was the *worship* of Mary: 'For if he does not want angels to be worshipped, how much more does he not want this for her born of Ann ...' (*Panarion* 1.79).[94] This could well have been the enthronement of the Lady, represented by the bread, which was then eaten by her worshippers, Wisdom feeding her children with herself. In a Christian setting she is named Mary, but significantly, this was done in Arabia, where the ousted priests of the first temple had settled.

There is also the custom of the Panagia which is observed in Orthodox monasteries after meals on Sundays and major feasts. Bread from the prosphora, the Panagia, is lifted up as the community prays to the Mother of God. The bread, accompanied by incense in a hand censer, is then offered to each member of the community, who takes a fragment, passes it through the smoke of the incense and then eats it.[95]

The Setting

Finally, in the setting of the Liturgy, it is clear that the rituals and traditions of the ancient holy of holies passed into Church. The altar in the Christian sanctuary corresponded not to the incense altar of the temple, nor to the great altar of sacrifice, which had been outside in the

temple court. It corresponded to the ark with its two cherubim in the holy of holies, beyond the veil in the desert tabernacle, and in some traditions, drawing a curtain to screen the holy place is still a part of the liturgy.[96] Some early sources speak of the cherubim of the altar[97] and in Ethiopian churches there is an ark in the sanctuary. This was the place where the LORD appeared (Exod. 25.22; Lev. 16.2). In the temple, this was the role of the throne in the holy of holies, where the human king sat as the LORD with his people, Immanuel (1 Chron. 29.23), after he had been born as the divine Son, and resurrected, raised up. Thus the Christian altar was both the ark and the throne, but it was also seen as the tomb from which the LORD was resurrected. A tomb, however, has no place in temple ritual.

This fusion of the images of throne and tomb probably arose in the time of Constantine, when the site of Jesus' tomb became the centre of the new Christian Jerusalem, and the Church of the Resurrection, the Anastasis, began to function as the new temple. Eusebius has left a report of the address when the great new church at Tyre was dedicated, and this shows that that building was a conscious imitation of the temple, with its builder a new Bezalel. Eusebius also knew that the earthly temple represented the heavenly reality: 'In the regions above the heavens are the models of everything on earth.'[98] In one sense, then, every church was a new temple, and the places where Christians worshipped were consciously modelled not on the synagogues, but on the temple. Since there had been considerable hostility to the actual temple in Jerusalem, with Jesus' prophecy of its destruction (Mark 13.2, and parallels) and Christian prophets condemning both the city and the temple as a harlot and rejoicing when it was burned (Rev. 17.1–19.3),[99] it would have been surprising if the church-as-temple claims had been an attempt to revive the second temple. When the first Christians rejected the contemporary temple in Jerusalem, it was not a sign that they were rejecting 'the old covenant',[100] but that they were rejecting what the temple had become since its rebuilding in the sixth century BCE. They were claiming to renew the original covenant, the eternal covenant, which had been eclipsed by emphasis on the covenant at Sinai. When the Christians deliberately adopted the ways of the temple, it was the first temple, with its royal cult of the Anointed One and the eternal covenant that shaped their world view and their liturgy.[101] It may not be coincidence that the two events in the life of Jesus, his birth and his resurrection, which could have been interpreted in terms of the ancient royal rituals in the holy of holies, were each marked by churches with temple proportions, the holy site in each case being in the holy of holies.[102]

When Constantine had the great church built at the site of Jesus' tomb, the few surviving texts show that this was a conscious replacement for the ancient temple, and a statement about his new

Jerusalem.[103] When a tomb had been identified as the tomb of Christ, the surrounding rock was cut away and a chapel known as the *edicule* (*aedicula* = the little house) was built over the sacred spot. The rediscovery of the tomb was itself regarded as a resurrection: 'The cave, the holy of holies, took on the appearance of the Saviour's return to life.'[104] At the front of the *edicule* was a porch with railings, as can be seen on the little pewter flasks which were brought home by pilgrims to the shrine.[105] The proportions of the Anastasis show that it replicated those of the temple, with the *edicule* as the holy of holies, and its area within the complex approximately one third of the length of the whole.[106] The actual shape of the new building bore little resemblance to the older temple; but the claims and symbolism were transferred to it. The stylized depiction of the *edicule* became the symbol for Jerusalem, just as the temple had been the symbol of the older Jerusalem. Thus when the Madaba mosaic map was made (560–65 CE), the Anastasis was shown as the central feature, set in the middle of the city, even though this was not accurate. Eusebius described the new buildings as 'in the heart of the Hebrew kingdom, on the very site of the *soterion marturion*', perhaps meaning 'witness of salvation'.[107]

There is a remarkable similarity between depictions of the temple to represent Jerusalem in Jewish art and depictions of the tomb of Christ to represent Jerusalem in Christian art.[108] Many of these representations of the *edicule* are on the small metal flasks used by pilgrims to bring back holy oil or water, and they show that the tomb of Christ was the major symbol for the holy places. There are many surviving depictions of the *edicule*: in the Rabbula Gospels, on a late sixth-century casket in the Lateran, in mosaics found in Syria and Jordan, on a bronze censer found in Egypt, and in several other places.[109] The stylized depictions of the *edicule* frequently resemble what appears on Jewish coins issued during the Bar Kochbar revolt (132–35 CE): a row of four columns in the midst of which the ark can be seen. This image on the coins must have been the holy of holies, not the temple. The holy of holies depicted in the Beth Alpha synagogue mosaic is also similar to the representations of the *edicule*. Since the Jewish representations are older than the Christian, the latter must have been imitations, *using the tomb of Christ as the new ark in the Christian holy of holies*.

Egeria, who was a pilgrim in Jerusalem 381–84 CE, described how the Feast of the Presentation was celebrated in the Anastasis with very special honour,[110] presumably because this church represented the temple in a special way. The Anastasis and the Golgotha church were both consecrated on the date when the true cross was rediscovered, which was also the date when Solomon had consecrated his temple.[111] A letter written by two Christian women at approximately the same time as Egeria's visit treated the tomb as the holy of holies:

> The Jews formerly venerated the holy of holies because there were there the cherubim, the mercy seat, the ark of the covenant, the manna, the rod of Aaron and the golden altar. Does not the tomb of the LORD seem more worthy of veneration? Each time we enter, we see the Saviour on his shroud, and if we stop for a moment, we see again the angel sat at his feet and the folded cloth at his head ...[112]

Egeria, however, described the cave of the tomb and the railed area around it as the sanctuary of the church, the area into which only the bishop and his clergy could go.[113]

She also saw relics: the horn used for the anointing oil of the kings and Solomon's ring, two very significant items.[114] Whoever produced them did not claim to have the more obvious objects like the ark or the candlestick. *These were items specific to the building of the first temple and its place as the royal shrine.* According to legend, the anointing oil had been hidden away in the time of King Josiah's changes to the temple, together with the ark, the manna, Aaron's rod and the coffer sent by the Philistines as a gift when they returned the ark.[115] The anointing oil had conferred the resurrected state on the king; it was the means of apotheosis. None of these items was in the second temple, and yet Christian pilgrims were shown relics establishing a claim to the first temple and its ideology. Legend also told of a demon who had hindered the building of the temple until the LORD sent the archangel Michael to Solomon with a magic ring,[116] and it is interesting that Eusebius, in his *Life of Constantine*, describes as 'demons' those who had tried to obliterate the holy sepulchre by building another temple over it.[117]

An unknown writer at the beginning of the sixth century left a brief description of these holy places. A pilgrim was still shown Solomon's ring and the horn with which David had anointed him, but also the altar where the holy Zechariah had been killed.[118] By this time Golgoltha was presented as the place where Isaac was offered, and as the place where Adam had been formed from the dust.[119] In the traditions found in the Palestinian Targums[120] Adam was created from the dust of 'the place of the house of the sanctuary' and Isaac was offered on Mount Moriah, where Solomon had built the temple (2 Chron. 3.1). There can be no question that this was being presented as the new temple.

Two liturgies are attributed to men who lived shortly after these churches were built: St Basil the Great (330–79 CE) and St John Chrysostom (347–407 CE). The imagery of the tomb and the throne in the holy of holies appears in these texts, along with a great deal of other temple imagery. As the priest uncovers the patten and chalice on the altar, for example, he says: 'Truly thy tomb O Christ has been shown to be brighter than any royal chamber, as bringing life, and more beautiful than Paradise; it is the fountain of our resurrection.' This is immediately recognizable as the holy of holies, the source of Life and pre-created Light, the throne whence flows the river of life. This image of the altar

as the tomb does not occur in the more ancient liturgy of Jerusalem, that of St James, but it survives intact and in detail in an early eighth-century text explaining the liturgy. *On the Divine Liturgy* of St Germanus 'shows how the Byzantines understood the liturgy for the greater part of their history'.[121] 'The apse corresponds to the cave in Bethlehem where Christ was born as well as the cave in which he was buried' (#3), which must be an allusion to the two churches with temple proportions in which the holy of holies was the place of birth or the place of resurrection. 'The holy table corresponds to the spot in the tomb where Christ was placed. On it lies the true and heavenly bread, the mystical and unbloody sacrifice ... the holy table is also the throne of God, on which borne by the cherubim, he rested in the body' (#4). Here the holy of holies of the ancient temple coalesces with the holy of holies in the Anastasis, and both were the place of resurrection. 'The chancel barriers indicate the place of prayer: the outside is for the people and the inside, the holy of holies, is accessible only to the priests. The barriers, made of bronze, are like those around the holy sepulchre ...' (#9). 'He died as a man and rose as God ...'(#36). Germanus next draws upon *the two crucial royal texts which described the birth and apotheosis of the ancient king in the holy of holies*:

> And the priest expounds on the unbegotten God, that is, the God and Father, and on the womb which bore the Son before the morning star and before the ages, as it is written; 'Out of the womb before the morning star I have begotten you' (Ps. 110 [109].3). And again the priest asks God to accomplish and bring about the mystery of his Son, that is, that the bread and wine be changed into the body and blood of Christ God – so that it might be fulfilled that 'Today I have begotten you' (Ps. 2.7). (#41)

Robert Taft, in his study of the 'Liturgy of the Great Church', suggested that this imagery of the tomb was introduced into the Liturgy as a result of the Jerusalem custom, attested by Egeria, of commemorating Gospel events at their actual location. Once the tomb had been identified, and the custom established of bringing the light out of the tomb, he suggested, 'its application to the Eucharist was so congruous as to be inevitable'. A new layer of interpretation was thus added to the older one of the angelic liturgy. 'Theodore of Mopsuestia by applying (this symbol system) to the Eucharist, inaugurated a tradition of interpretation that eventually spread throughout the whole of Christendom.'[122] It may not, however, have been simply congruity of symbolism that prompted the introduction of tomb imagery. The natural setting for the original 'angelic liturgy', as can now be seen from the liturgical texts found at Qumran, was the holy of holies in the temple, the place where the royal high priests had themselves been resurrected. The question that cannot be answered with certainty is: Was this imagery of the tomb introduced simply because it 'fitted' the prevailing mood, or did those who adopted it know the temple

traditions associated with the holy of holies as a place of resurrection? The evidence suggests the latter.[123]

A recurring theme in texts associated with the Eucharist is fear and awe, the fear which the high priest felt as he entered the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. In the *Liturgy of St James*, the priest, as he stands before the holy doors about to enter the sanctuary, says: '... we are full of fear and trembling as we are about to stand before your holy altar ...'. Narsai wrote in his homilies (*Homily* XVIIA): 'The dread mysteries ... let everyone be in fear and dread as they are performed ... the hour of trembling and great fear.' Cyril of Jerusalem speaks of 'the most awful hour' and 'the most awful sacrifice' (*Catecheses* 23.4, 9). The Nestorian Liturgy speaks of 'the great fearful holy life giving divine mystery', and the priest prays in the words of Isaiah in the temple: 'Woe is me, for mine eyes have seen the LORD of Hosts' and, like Moses before the ark, he says 'I have seen the LORD face to face.'

Throughout the liturgies, the imagery is of the holy of holies and the angel hosts. Just as the ancient kings had been 'born' in the glory of the holy ones, and were thus 'raised up', i.e. resurrected, so, too, the bread and wine was raised up/resurrected at the moment of consecration. Narsai, having described the awe and stillness in the sanctuary at the moment of consecration, continued: 'The Spirit which raised him from the dead comes down now and celebrates the mysteries of the resurrection of his body.' The consecration was the resurrection: the power of the Godhead comes upon the oblation, 'and completes the mystery of our LORD's resurrection from the dead'. The LORD emerging from the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement, accompanied by the angel hosts, became the procession when the bread and wine were brought from the sanctuary. Narsai again: 'Thousands of Watchers and ministers of fire and spirit go forth' with the resurrected LORD, and the people rejoice 'when they see the Body setting forth from the midst of the altar' (*Homily*XVIIA). This strongly resembles the final words of the Song of Moses, when the LORD comes forth to bring judgement, and the heaven and earth praise him whilst all the angels and sons of God worship (Deut. 32.43); and also the opening words of the Blessing of Moses, when the LORD appeared in shining light accompanied by his angels and those consecrated to him (Deut. 33.2–5).[124] The former of these is the proof text for the Firstborn being brought into the world as the angels worship him (Heb. 1.6), a text which must have been of particular significance in early debates because the key words – worship by the angels – do not appear in the Masoretic Hebrew text but are present in the Qumran (i.e. pre-Christian) Hebrew text and in the LXX. This text must also have been an inspiration for the Cherubic Hymn, which may account for the 'angel worship' having disappeared from one version of the Hebrew text.

There is also the question of the LORD's Prayer, spoken by all the

people before the Communion. 'Thy Kingdom come' is clearly, in this context, a prayer for the opening of the holy place, the joining of earth and heaven as in the temple tradition. 'Give us this day our daily bread' cannot at this point be a prayer for ordinary food, but for the heavenly bread. 'Daily' as a translation of *epiousios* has always been a problem, because the meaning of this very rare word is uncertain. Jerome (died 420 CE) in his commentary on Psalm 135 shows that there was another understanding of *epiousios*: 'In the Hebrew Gospel according to Matthew, it is thus: "Our bread of the morrow, give us this day" that is, the bread which Thou wilt give us in thy kingdom, give us this day.' This is reflected in the canonical Matthew 'Give us today the *epiousios* bread' (Matt. 6.11),[125] and in Jerome's rendering which became the Vulgate: '*supersubstantialis*' bread. Since he seems to have invented this word, we can only guess what he intended, but it could have been a recognition that this was supernatural bread. In his commentary on Matthew 6.11 he reveals that the Hebrew word was *mahar*, tomorrow, and 'tomorrow' for the first Christians had a special significance. If Jerome reported accurately, the corresponding Greek to *mahar* may have been the very similar *epiousos*.[126]

The *Letter of Barnabas* describes the six days of creation as the six thousand years of human history, after which the Son would return and the true Sabbath rest begin (*Barn.* 15). This Sabbath was the millennium kingdom, the original kingdom of God. The Hebrew Christians, still struggling on the sixth day, were assured that the Sabbath rest awaited them (Heb. 4.9–10). Jesus countered his critics by implying that the true Sabbath had not yet begun: 'My father is working still and I am working', he said, when accused of breaking the Sabbath by healing (John 5.17). There had long been a curious fusion of the seventh day and Day One, attested as early as the writings of Aristobulus.[127] 'God ... gave us the seventh day for rest ... this could in reality also be called the first and the begetting of the light in which all things are seen at the same time ...'[128] This is recognizable as the state of unity beyond the veil, Day One. Aristobulus went on to equate this also with Wisdom, who was brought forth before heaven and earth were made. Thus, whilst looking for their great 'tomorrow', the first Christians were looking for a state of rest and also for life within the veil, such as John described in Revelation 22.1–5. They would all behold the face of God-and-the-Lamb, and his name would be on their foreheads. They would all be priests in the holy of holies, and thus entitled to eat the Bread of the Presence, fed to the priests on the Sabbath. Elsewhere, the risen LORD promised to each faithful servant that he would eat from the fruit of the tree of life (Rev. 2.7). The Liturgies of Addai and Mari, of St John Chrysostom and of St James all have similar themes: remission of sins, enlightenment, access to the LORD, life in the Kingdom. These are priestly aspirations, and the Bread of the Presence was the Sabbath food of the priests.

'Give us today the Bread of Tomorrow', the prayer of the whole congregation as the elements of the Eucharist were prepared, was a prayer for the Bread of the Kingdom, the Bread of the Great Sabbath, the Bread of the Presence. The Bread of the Presence was the Bread of Wisdom. When the bread is prepared in the Orthodox tradition, it is stamped with an image before it is baked.[129] It may only be coincidence, but the Bread of the Presence in the temple had been moulded in a special way before it was baked, and the devotees of the Queen of Heaven had made special bread to depict her. In his study of bread stamps, Galavaris offered an example from the fifth or sixth century, inscribed 'Our Daily Bread LORD Grant Us'. He concluded that this had been for eucharistic bread: 'It must be remembered that people were particularly familiar with the relation of the LORD 's Prayer to the Holy Communion as the liturgies since early times demonstrate ... In all eastern liturgies, the entire congregation participates in the recitation ... Only in Rome was the prayer recited by the priest alone.'[130]

Although this has been only a sketch, and there is much more material, it has perhaps been sufficient to indicate some area in which the roots of the eucharistic Liturgy might be sought, and to emphasize the importance of establishing the continuity between the Old Testament as the first Christians knew it, the New Testament, and the way the Christians expressed their beliefs in their Liturgies.

6

THE ANGEL PRIESTHOOD[1]

They shall be priests, his righteous people, his host, servants, the angels of his glory. (Qumran *Songs of the Sage* 4Q510–511 35)

Though the office of the priesthood is exercised on earth, it ranks, nevertheless, in the celestial order of things – and rightly so. It was neither man nor an angel nor an archangel nor any other created power, but the Paraclete himself who established this ministry, and who ordained that men abiding in the flesh should imitate the ministry of angels. (John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* 3.4)

Said Rabbi Isaac: 'We are aware that the structure of the tabernacle corresponds to the structure of heaven and earth'. (Zohar, *Exodus* 149a)

We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men ... for we cannot forget that beauty.[2]

The most ancient traditions say that Israel's worship had to replicate heaven on earth. Moses was told to copy in the tabernacle what he had seen on Sinai, not a heavenly temple, but a symbolic depiction of the entire creation (Exod. 25.9, 40). Everything was prescribed; the materials from which the tabernacle had to be constructed, the furnishings, the vestments of the priests and the perfumed oil and incense. David, too, received instructions from the LORD about the building of the first temple. He handed on to Solomon detailed plans for the buildings, the organization of the priesthood, the services, the exact weight of the golden vessels and lamps, the precise form of the furnishings and the plan for the great chariot throne over the ark of the covenant. 'All this he made clear by the writing from the hand of the LORD concerning it' (1 Chron. 28.11–19). Levi had a vision of the heavenly worship. A text from the end of the second temple period describes the Great Glory in the holy of holies, and with him the archangels 'who serve and offer propitiatory sacrifices to the LORD on behalf of sins of ignorance of the righteous ones' (*Testament of Levi* 3.5–6). Later tradition recorded that the vestments of Aaron were a copy of the vestments of God (*Exod. R.* XXXVIII.8).

Whatever was done on earth, then, whether in tabernacle or temple, was not a matter for human choice but was replicating something seen in a vision. This is how the Church understood the Sinai tradition:

Moses himself, having first been thought worthy to view the divine realities in secret and the mysteries concerning the first and only Anointed High Priest of God, which were celebrated before him in his theophanies, is ordered to establish figures and symbols on earth of what he had seen in his mind in visions (Eusebius, *Proof* 4.15).

The *Epistle of the Apostles* ends with a description of the Ascension: 'The heavens parted asunder and there appeared a bright cloud which bore him up. And there came voices of many angels rejoicing and singing praises and saying "Gather us O priest unto the light of the majesty (*Ep. Apost.* 51)." '[3]. The importance of this theme can be seen also in the so called Gnostic texts, which have preserved many aspects of the ancient temple tradition. Clement of Alexandria quoted extensively from the teachings of Theodotus, a valuable source: only the Archangel, he taught, could enter the fiery place at the heart of creation, 'and to typify this, the high priest every year enters the holy of holies'.[4]

The great vision in Daniel 7, the Man figure going with clouds into heaven, was inspired by the ancient belief that the offering made on earth 'was' the offering in heaven. We no longer know how the high priest's self offering was represented in ritual in the first temple; in the second temple it had been by the blood of the goat sacrificed on the Day of Atonement. Daniel's vision shows what this ritual 'was'. Before the Man was enthroned and given 'dominion and glory and kingdom' (Dan. 7.14) he had to be offered to the Ancient of Days. The word rendered in the English versions by 'presented' did not mean being introduced to the court. *It meant being presented as an offering*, cf. *1 En.* 47, where the blood of the Righteous One is brought before the throne. This was the heavenly reality of the blood offered in the holy of holies: the high priest was offering himself. Since the high priest 'was' the LORD, it was inevitable that this vision in Daniel should have become a key text for the early Church, both quoted and implied.

> But when the Anointed One appeared, a high priest of good things to come, then through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is not of this creation, he entered once for all into the holy place, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. (Heb. 9.11–12, my translation)

Later church builders were true to this tradition:

> Paintings or mosaics of the Eternal Mass were usually placed in the sanctuary of Byzantine churches or chapels, on the walls sufficiently high to be seen above the iconostasis which screened off from the congregation the sanctuary where the Mass was offered. The congregation was conscious of the actual ceremony of the Mass only from the chant of the Liturgy (Byzantine masses were always sung), and from the clouds of incense rising above the iconostasis during the ceremony. ... [When a vested figure emerged] it was as if the figures from the representation of the eternal Mass on the wall above suddenly came alive and were in their midst. It was a dramatic way of emphasizing that what was being offered in the Holy Sacrifice on the earthly altar behind the iconostasis was identical with that being perennially offered by Christ the Eternal High Priest in heaven.[5]

The Book of Revelation describes heavenly worship, proof that this

was central to the world view of the early Church, even before the destruction of the temple.[6] After the destruction of the temple, it has been suggested that its imagery and cultic traditions survived in the visions of the Jewish Merkavah mystics, and that this was in some way a 'replacement' for the lost temple.[7] On the other hand, since mystical practices were a long established element of temple tradition, as can be deduced from the Deuteronomists' attempts to suppress them (Deut. 29.29; 30.11–14), it is more likely that the Church's angel priesthood was a living continuation of that ancient tradition, in place before the second temple was destroyed.

In John's vision, twenty-four elders with their incense joined with the four living creatures and myriads of angels to worship around the throne (Rev. 4.2–5.14). The elders must have been priests, because, in the temple tradition, only a priest was allowed to offer incense – and they stood among the angels. In the opening vision of the Book of Revelation, John had seen the risen LORD standing in the great hall of the temple, in the midst of the seven lamps. He had eyes of fire and his face shone like the sun. He was barefoot, wearing a long robe and a golden girdle, which identify him as the high priest.[8] He sent letters to the leaders of the seven churches, described as the angels of those churches. *We must conclude that from the first generation, bishops were regarded as angels.*

One generation later, Ignatius of Antioch compared the bishop and his clergy to the LORD and his heavenly council of angels (*Magnesians* 6; *Trallians* 3), an image well known in the Old Testament (e.g. 1 Kgs 22.19–23). Both John 'who leaned on the LORD's breast', and James the Righteous were remembered as high priests who had worn the *petalon*, the golden seal inscribed with the four letters of the Sacred Name.[9] No other rank of priest wore this item of regalia. Throughout the Book of Revelation, angels function as priests: they burn incense (Rev. 8.3), they come from heaven to earth with secrets (Rev. 10.7) and as a sevenfold group they emerge from the holy of holies with golden bowls of wrath (Rev. 15.7), an image from the Day of Atonement. These images alone would have been sufficient to account for the Church's heavenly liturgy and angel priests. They could have been an innovation, a part of John's revelation with no roots earlier than his own inspiration. *Even the briefest of overviews, however, shows that the heavenly liturgy and the angel priesthood, replicated in the actual liturgies of the temple, were the most ancient traditions of the Jerusalem temple, perpetuated as a living tradition in the Church.*

The Angels

The role of the angels in Christian Liturgy derives not from the hierarchy described by Dionysius, but from the older biblical view.[10]

The Bible, however, is curiously reticent about its angels, due to the work of the editors in the second temple period, who even deprived the LORD of his title LORD of Hosts.[11] The 'reforming' Deuteronomists, who were opposed to people concerning themselves with the secret things which belonged to the LORD (Deut. 29.29), were also opposed to the sun, moon and stars and the host of heaven (Deut. 4.12), and their description of the temple had place for neither the veil nor the cherub throne (1 Kgs 6, cf. 1 Chron. 28.18; 2 Chron. 3.10–14), nor the music (1 Chron. 15.16–16.38 but not in parallel passage in 1 Kgs), nor the Day of Atonement, which is missing from the calendar in Deuteronomy 16. Works which have their *imprimatur* are unlikely to reveal much about the temple which they set out to 'purify' or about the angels who were at the heart of its cult. It comes as no surprise that the works which did concern themselves with the 'secret things' recorded a great deal about angels, because, in terms of temple cosmology, the angels were part of the holy of holies, and so knowledge of the angels must have been part of the 'secrets'.

The Deuteronomists and temple 'reformers' were only the first of the obstacles to reconstructing the role of the angels. Many sacred books were known to have existed that never became public scripture. The Ezra legend, which tells how he dictated to five scribes all the lost Scriptures, also records that he was told by the Most High:

> Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom and the river of knowledge. (*2 Esdr.* 14.45-47)

Only one quarter of the known texts could be used openly, a later version of the prohibition in Deuteronomy, that the secret things of the LORD were not for the general public. Given that *2 Esdras* was written about 100 CE, what the legend of Ezra is actually describing is the process by which the Hebrew canon was formed after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. The excluded texts that survived only did so because they were preserved by Christian scribes,[12] *suggesting that the angels and the secrets must have been important for the Church.*

Later Jewish mystical texts were to have 'the great mystery' as their major theme, but the lateness of the actual text is no indication of the age of the tradition preserved in it. So many similarities to the Christian teachings that are not obviously in the Old Testament suggest that the traditions were pre-Christian but non-biblical, as it is unlikely that Jews would have adopted Christian innovations about, for example, the enthronement of the Servant. The *Merkavah Rabbah* shows that knowledge of the Name and of the names of the angels[13] lay at the heart of the mystery, as did the recitation of the Shema', declaring that the *''elohim'* are a Unity which is the LORD. Those who knew this

mystery found their lives and their perception of the world transformed. 'When my ears heard this great mystery, the world was transformed over me in purity, and my heart was as if I had arrived in a new world. Every day it appeared to my soul as if I was standing in front of the throne of glory (#680).' The mystic was enlightened and his face shone. The LORD bound himself to the mystic (perhaps a reference to the Name being bound on to the high priest, Exod. 28.36–38, albeit using a different verb) and then sent him back to the creation to bear witness to the mystery (#686).[14] Schäfer observes: 'The text shows ... that it is almost impossible to differentiate between God and his angel.'[15] In the study of angels, this mystery of the unity between the mystic, the angel and the LORD is crucial, as can be seen from Jesus' prayer in John 17.

The first absent angels are missing from the beginning of Genesis. The parallel account in the *Book of Jubilees* describes how all the spirits who minister before the Creator were begotten and created on Day One: the Angels of Presence, sanctification, fire, winds, weathers, seasons and the spirits of all creatures existed before the visible material world was formed (*Jub.* 2.2). The concluding summary of the creation story in Genesis hints that there had at one time been angels in the story: 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and *all the host of them*.' Insofar as one of their titles was 'sons of God', and divine sonship was an important element in temple rituals based on angel lore, some at least of the angels must have been 'begotten not created' before the world was made.[16] Traces of the angels remain elsewhere, for example in the catalogue of the creation in Psalm 104, where they are listed after the heavens have been stretched out like a tent, but before the earth has been founded (Ps. 104.4), and in the Song of the Three Children (the Benedicite) which lists all the heavens, the angels, the powers and the weathers before mentioning the visible earth. In the Book of Job, which retains many features of the older cult, the 'sons of God' sang as the earth was founded (Job 38.7). There were angels in the tradition, but not in the final form of the Scriptures.

The angels and the angel priesthood in the temple cannot be recovered from the standard 'historical' treatments of the second temple offered to students today. Schürer, for example, says only that 'the high priests of the pre-Maccabaean as well as the Hasmonean era were not merely priests but also princes'.[17] A mass of information is offered about the priestly families, sources of revenues, management of temple funds, the hierarchy, organization of temple ceremonial, temple security, the police duties of the Levites, and so on, but there is nothing about what the priests believed themselves to be, and what their rituals effected. These have to be reconstructed from other texts, and, because such things were almost certainly regarded as the secrets of the priesthood, many of the details can only be a matter of speculation.

It is beyond doubt that the priests were angels, and this information is

more important for understanding the links between Christian Liturgy and its temple antecedents than any amount of historical information about the practical matters of temple organization. Even texts which seem to say nothing of priestly angels are known from contemporary interpretation to have been understood in that way. Deuteronomy 32.43, for example, which exists in several forms, describes the LORD coming to punish his enemies and to atone the land. One must first ask *why* there are different forms of this text. The Qumran Hebrew and the LXX have a longer form than the MT, the latter *having no angels*, but the other two describing how the sons of God, the *'elohim*, the angels, bow in worship before the LORD as he comes forth to atone the land, i.e. as the high priest on the Day of Atonement. In Hebrews 1.6 this longer form of the text is applied to Jesus, and is therefore of special interest for reconstructing early Christian belief. It means that the writer to the Hebrews identified Jesus not only as the Great High Priest (Heb. 4.14), but also as the LORD before whom the angels bow in worship. His coming forth in glory was the advent of the LORD on the Day of Atonement/Judgement.[18] This is consistent with Acts 3.19–20, where people are exhorted to repent in preparation for the LORD returning from heaven. The Day of Atonement was the time of judgement and renewal, and so the return of the LORD was to bring the blotting out of sin and times of renewal.

The holy of holies, Day One, was the state of unity outside time and matter, before the world was created by dividing and separating according to their kinds (the theme of Genesis 1), and so all angels must have been in some sense a Unity. This appears in Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy*, where, having dealt with 'the material and incongruous images of the angels as found in sacred scripture', Dionysius explains what is meant by the hierarchy and the 'advantage that such hierarchy offers to those who are members of it . . . Keep these holy truths a secret in your hidden mind. Guard their unity safe from the multiplicity of what is profane.'[19] It was a hidden truth that mortals could be a part of the hierarchy which was in essence a unity.

There is a glimpse of this in Ezekiel's description of the chariot throne, with fire, and in the midst of it, torches moving to and fro. This overall unity must be borne in mind when reading texts which seem to blur the distinction between the LORD and the angel of the LORD, or between the LORD and any number of angels. A text found at Nag Hammadi, of uncertain date but of very great interest, links the angel beings to aspects of time, suggesting that the angels are all 'contained' within each other and ultimately within God, just as small units of time are each parts of a greater unit and thus of the all-inclusive Time itself.

Time came to be as a type of the first begetter, his son. The year came to be as a type of the Saviour, the 12 months came to be as a type of the 12 powers, the 360 days of the

year came to be as a type of the 360 powers who were revealed by the Saviour. In relation to the angels who came out of these, who are without number, the hours and the moments of the days came to be as a type. (CG III.3, *Letter of Eugnostos* 84)[20]

Thus angel beings, when they come into the material world, are perceived as fragments of something greater, just as seconds and minutes are fragments of Time. Beyond and encompassing them all is the Antecedent of Time, one possible translation offered for the more familiar divine title the Ancient of Days.[21] In terms of angel beings, this all encompassing One was the Fullness (the *pleroma*), and was equated with the state of Light, Day One, the holy of holies.[22] Thus Dionysius wrote: 'He is the reality beneath time and the eternity behind being. ... From him who is come eternity, essence and being, come time, genesis and becoming. He is the being immanent in and underlying the things which are, however they are ...'. 'They call him Ancient of Days because he is the eternity and time of everything, and because he precedes days and eternity and time.'[23] It is a mistake to identify this as a Neoplatonic reading of the Bible. The language is Greek, but the ideas are those of the ancient priesthood.[24]

This important concept illuminates the great high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17. At first he prays to be glorified with the Father in His presence, 'With the glory I had with thee before the world was made' (v.5), and he speaks of 'my glory which thou hast given me ... before the foundation of the world' (v.24), clear references to the holy of holies/Day One. The major theme of the prayer is unity, 'that they may be one even as we are one' (v.22). The perfect unity is a sign of divinity, and proof of Jesus' origin (v.23). He has come from the One, he is part of the One, and he makes his disciples One. This theme is repeated at the end of the Book of Revelation, where the servants of God-and-the-Lamb (a unity) worship him in the place where the LORD God is their light, and they have his name on their foreheads. In other words, they have been admitted to the holy of holies/Day One, and they bear on their foreheads the mark of high priesthood, the Name. The authentic temple tradition appears in the teachings of the Gnostic Theodotus (*Excerpts* 36):[25]

They say that our angels were put forth in unity and are one in that they came out from One. Now since we existed in separation, Jesus was baptized that the undivided should be divided until he should unite us with them in the pleroma[26] that we the many having become one might all be mingled in the One which was divided for our sakes.

The unity-and-plurality of the angels underlies even familiar texts. The Hebrew word usually translated 'God' is a plural form, *'elohim*, and the sense of a passage sometimes demands that the English be 'God' and sometimes 'angels'. Thus Psalm 82 begins: *'elohim* has taken his stand in

the council of El, in the midst of the *'elohim* he gives judgement'. This is understood to mean 'God [thus too in the LXX] has taken his place [singular because singular verb] in the council of El [but the LXX has gods], in the midst of the gods/angels [where a singular would make no sense] he gives judgement.' The very familiarity of this ambiguity should not allow us to overlook the fact that it is there. The great statement of monotheism is literally a statement that *'our 'elohim'* are/is a unity: 'The LORD our God/gods is One LORD' (Deut. 6.4). Origen knew that the angels fell *when they broke their unity with God* (*On First Principles* 1.8).[27]

Zechariah 3 describes the scene in the holy of holies as the new high priest is being vested, and it serves to illustrate important points about the holy of holies and the high priest. First, the high priest is vested among the angels, second, the one who orders his vesting has several names, and third, the high priest is granted access to the place of the angels. Joshua stands before the angel of the LORD (v.1) and then the LORD speaks to Satan who is standing there to make accusation. Then an unnamed 'angel' who has the authority to take away iniquity (v.4), gives commands to those around him to take away Joshua's filthy garments and to vest him. The angel of the LORD then speaks and gives the new high priest the right to enter and stand among the angels (v.7). This is a scene where one principal angel stands among others to vest his high priest (cf. John 10.36, the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world). This great angel, in one short passage, is described as the LORD, the angel of the LORD or simply as the angel. Such fluidity with names is common; the story of Moses at the burning bush is similar, with the 'angel of the LORD' appearing to Moses in the flames of the bush, then 'the LORD' seeing Moses, and 'God' speaking to him (Exod. 3.22–24). The angel who appeared to Samson's mother was variously described as 'angel of the LORD', 'a man of God whose appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God', 'the man'; and her husband said: 'we have seen God' (Judg. 13.3, 6, 11, 22).

When the new king/high priest was 'born' in the holy of holies, it was his moment of apotheosis, and the angels welcomed the birth of the new angel. He was designated the Davidic king and then named: 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be ...'. The Hebrew then gives four names: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, to use the familiar translations, but the LXX has only name, 'the Angel of Great Counsel' (Isa. 9.6). The king was a pluriform angel, born in the place of light,[28] a son of God (cf. the argument of John 10.36, where the one who is consecrated and sent into the world is a Son of God). His name 'Immanuel' shows that he was God with his people. Elsewhere in the Hebrew text of Isaiah, there is the Angel of the Presence/Face, but the LXX, translated well into the second temple

period, was at pains to make clear that this was not another heavenly being but a way of describing the LORD himself. 'The Angel of his Presence saved them' became 'Not an elder nor an angel but he himself saved them' (Isa. 63.9, LXX). There had perhaps been a danger in a Greek-speaking milieu that people might misunderstand what was meant by the Angel of the Presence/Face. *It was therefore necessary to emphasise that the Angel of the Presence was the LORD.* This is important; there is a tendency in modern treatments of angels to suggest that an angel of the Presence was an angel who stood in the Presence, but the ancient texts imply otherwise. The angel *was* the Presence.

In *1 Enoch* 40, the angels around the heavenly throne are described as the four 'Presences' and then named as the four archangels, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Phanuel (*1 En.* 40.9). These were the four angels/Presences of the LORD of Spirits, in other words, they were aspects of the LORD who could be perceived by humans. *In Greek, 'faces' is* 'prosopa', *and this came to be translated in later Christian theology as the 'persons' of the Trinity.* There is not just one Angel of the Presence; there can be several. 'The men of thy glorious council, those who share a common lot with the Angels of the Presence' appear in one of the Qumran Hymns (1QH XIV, formerly VI). The blessing for the Zadokite priests was 'May you attend upon the service in the temple of the Kingdom, and may you decree destiny in the company of the Angels of the Presence' (1QSb IV). The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice mention seven ruling Princes in the inner temple (e.g. 4Q403.1), and in John's vision, the seven identical angels who emerge from the holy of holies are all dressed as the high priest, with linen robes and golden girdles (Rev. 15.6). Each carries a bowl of wrath, just as the one earthly high priest would have carried a bowl of blood from the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. In the visible creation, the unity can be manifested as a simultaneous plurality, and the LORD was experienced as strength (Gabriel meaning strength of God), illumination (Uriel meaning light of God), healing (Raphael meaning healing of God), and so forth. The name of the angel described the perception of the Presence.

In the period of Christian origins, this easy interchange of angels and the LORD, singular and plural, can be seen in Josephus' retelling of the Hebrew Scriptures. The story of the theophany at Mamre is an appearance of the LORD (Gen. 18.1), described as three men appearing to Abraham (Gen. 18.2), whom we assume were the LORD and two angels. Then the 'men' went away whilst the LORD remained with Abraham (Gen. 18.22) and finally the two angels went to Sodom (Gen. 19.1). Thus the Hebrew text: but Josephus described them simply as three angels, and, observing the convention that an angel can have only one mission, explained that one was sent to inform about the birth of Isaac and the other two about the overthrow of Sodom (*Ant.* 1.11).

Genesis Rabbah also interprets this story as the appearance of three angels: 'Michael announced the tidings [to Abraham], Gabriel (strength) was sent to overturn Sodom, and Raphael (healing) to rescue Lot' (*Gen. R.* L.2). Both Josephus and the writer of the Midrash would have had before them Genesis 18, and yet neither mentioned the LORD. Conversely, when Josephus retold the story of the binding of Isaac, the angel of the LORD (Gen. 22.11, 15) became 'God'.

The secrets of the holy of holies, both the unity of the angels and apotheosis of the human to be in that unity, were transmitted in Judaism as Kabbalah.[29] The importance of this for understanding Christian origins (and vice versa) has been obscured first by mutual suspicion and prejudice, but second by the influence of the earlier scholars of Jewish mysticism who taught that union with the divine was alien to Jewish experience and not attested in mystical texts.[30] M. Idel, on the other hand, argued that the transformation of Enoch into the great angel Metatron is proof of the antiquity of the tradition within Judaism. Quoting from a medieval text, he shows how 'mystical union is presented as a process of assimilation to the Divine'. The text in question quotes 'Thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee' (Ps. 2.7), and explains that the secret teaching in this passage concerns the 'cleaving of divine power'. Idel explains: 'The phrases "I, I", and "I, even I am he" stand [in this text] for the union of the divine with the human.' He adds in his note: 'The use of this verse (Ps. 2.7), so crucial to Christian theology and mysticism, may have something to do with Christian influence.'[31] On the other hand, it may not. This tradition may even be as old as it claims to be, and have its roots in the temple. The study of the earliest channels for Jewish mysticism labours under the same difficulty as does the study of the secret tradition in Christianity: it was an oral and hidden tradition, whose very existence has to be deduced from allusions and shadows. The literary approach now dominates the field, because texts are the only hard evidence that we have, but it must be correct to say that the Jewish motifs and concepts discernible in Gnostic texts 'remained at the same time the patrimony of Jewish thought and continued to be transmitted in Jewish circles, ultimately providing the conceptual framework of Kabbalah'.[32] Since these motifs and concepts, which feature in the New Testament and in early liturgy, derive from the temple, they are of great importance for understanding the origin of the Christians who claimed to be the new royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2.9) under their great High Priest (Heb. 4.14).

The human had to cleave to God, *dbk*, but how was this term understood? In Genesis 2.24 the meaning is quite clear: the man *cleaves* to his wife and they become one flesh. The Deuteronomists had (perhaps introduced?) a different understanding, and so for them cleaving to the LORD became a term for absolute obedience to the

commandments (Deut. 10.20; 11.22; 13.4; 30.20).[33] There was clearly an ambiguity about the concept, because R. Akiba taught: 'Ye that cleave to the LORD your God – literally cleaving' (*b. Sanhedrin* 64a). Discussing this and other texts, Idel observed: 'From the context, we may conclude that cleaving is a closer kind of contact than "attaching" ... of the devotee to God'.[34] R. Akiba's teaching must be the (near contemporary) context for understanding such sayings as 'I and my Father are one thing' (John.10.30), especially as the context here is the claim to high priesthood: 'Do you say of him whom the Father *consecrated* and sent into the world "You are blaspheming", because I said, "I am the Son of God"?' (John 10.36).

Jesus described angels as sons of God and resurrected (Luke 20.36). This first-century statement is consistent with the picture in Psalm 110 (LXX, 109), where the one who becomes 'Melchizedek' is 'begotten' in the glory of the holy ones. This was the light of Day One, and so he would have been a son of the light, a title claimed by both the Qumran community, e.g. in the War Scroll which described the war of the sons of light against the sons of darkness, and by the Christians, e.g. John 12.36; 1 Thess. 5.5; *Thomas* 50: 'We came from the light, the place where the light came into being of its own accord.' There is evidence in the Letter to the Hebrews that the Melchizedek high priest was believed to be resurrected, that is, living the life of heaven rather than of this earth. Melchizedek had no priestly descent, we are told (Heb. 7.3), but was like the Son of God. The contrast in this chapter is between bodily descent, which was the qualification for the priesthood of Aaron, and 'the power of an indestructible life', the characteristic of the priesthood of Melchizedek. This suggests that raised up, used twice of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7, should not be understood as 'elevated to high office' but 'resurrected', made high priest by the power of an indestructible life (the verbs are *anistasthai*, v.11; *anistatai,* v.15). The ancient kings were described in the same way: 'raised on high and anointed' (2 Sam. 23.1, hiph'il of *qwm*; see also Ps. 89.19–20 where there is the hiph'il of *rwm*). If the high priest was resurrected, he would have been an angel, a son of God. There are, as we shall see, non-canonical texts to show that this was the case, that he was transformed into an angel at his anointing.

The problems facing any investigation such as this are the age of the texts we use, the age of the traditions within those texts, and the politics of those who transmitted them. It is no longer possible to say simply that biblical texts are old, and non-biblical are later, or that biblical texts must always be given priority over non-biblical, or that 'Jewish' readings are more likely to preserve the ancient tradition than later 'Christian' understanding. The first question has to be: Whose canon do we accept? And the second: Whose understanding of Scripture? It cannot be assumed that Christian exegetes had 'an agenda' and their Jewish counterparts did not.

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews understood Deuteronomy 32.43, the LORD coming on the Day of Atonement, as a prophecy of the Angel High Priest. A contemporary text, the *Assumption of Moses*, has an expansion and interpretation of this verse, in which the One who emerges to bring the judgement is described as the high priest, the chief angel whose hands have been filled (i.e. with incense), coming forth from his holy habitation (*Ass. Mos.*10.1–3). He is also a warrior, and so we have the LORD as a warrior high priest, exactly as Jesus is depicted in the Book of Revelation: the Word of God riding out from heaven, followed by an army clad in the white linen of the angels. He is wearing a linen robe, such as the high priest wore on the Day of Atonement, and it is spattered with blood, presumably from the atonement sprinklings, as the battle has not yet begun. The ancient accounts of the sons of Aaron show that they indeed had been warriors: Phineas took his spear to deal with those who had broken the covenant (Num. 25.6ff.), and he took the sacred vessels and the trumpets when the army of Israel went out against Midian (Num. 31.6). The Qumran War Scroll (1QM) describes the battle formation for the final conflict between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. Seven priests from the family of Aaron, i.e. high priests, vested in white linen, were to stand at the head of the troops. The Prince of Light himself would come to help them (1QM XIII). Every soldier has to be in a state of ritual purity, because holy angels would be fighting alongside them (1QM VII, XII). Jesus the warrior high priest does not feature in popular readings of the New Testament, and yet angel warriors appeared in Christian art.[35]

The question of ritual purity and the presence of the angels was a problem. None of Aaron's descendants who was in any way blemished could 'approach to offer the bread of his God' (Lev. 21.16–23). In the Mishnah these restrictions were defined even more closely and applied to all who served in the temple. A man afflicted with a turnip-shaped head, for example, was excluded, as were the bald, those with little eyes like a goose, and the knock-kneed. There was an extensive list of physical blemishes that rendered a man unfit for the company of the angels (*m. Bekhoroth* 7.1–7). It must have been this emphasis on the externals of purity which prompted Jesus' teaching about the purity required for his priests, those who would look on the Face: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5.8).

The chief of the angel priests was the LORD, the Son of God Most High. *Without this important identification of the LORD of the Hebrew Scriptures as the Second Person of the (later) Christian Trinity, the role of the high priest in the liturgy of the temple and the Church cannot be understood in its original setting.* Early Christian writers understood that the appearances of the LORD in the Old Testament had been appearances of the Second Person, the Son.[36] For them, the LORD, the Son of God Most High, who had been incarnate in Jesus, was the God of Israel. He was the

Great Angel who had 'been' the Davidic king and the high priest. Eusebius, explaining Psalm 45.6–7, 'Thy throne O God is for ever and ever ... wherefore God thy God hath anointed thee ...' records what must have been believed in the fourth century CE:

> The Anointer, being the Supreme God, is far above the Anointed, he being God in a different sense ... therefore in these words you have it clearly stated that God was anointed and became the Christ ... And this is he who was the beloved of the Father, and his Offspring, and the eternal priest, and the being called the Sharer of the Father's throne. (*Proof* 4.15)

The *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a Jewish text from the end of the first century CE, depicts the LORD as a vested angel. He appears to Abraham as Iaoel, i.e.Yahwehel, Iao being the Greek pronunciation of Yahweh. He was radiant and had white hair, like the risen LORD of Revelation 1.12–16, but with the turban, robe and staff of the high priest (*Ap. Abr.* 11.1–4). Angels were the messengers who passed between eternity and time, between the holy of holies and the visible creation.

Perceiving Angels

Although we tend to imagine angels as a visible presence, the divine presence was discerned through all five senses, and through the 'sixth sense' also. The prophets' visions show how the presence was communicated to all the human senses: Isaiah saw the LORD, heard the voices, smelled the smoke (we assume) and felt the coal on his lips (Isa. 6); John saw the mighty angel, heard the voice, felt the scroll on the palm of his hand, and ate it (Rev. 10).[37] An angel of the LORD appeared to Zechariah (Luke 1.11) but there is no mention of an angel *appearing* to Mary at the Annunciation. She heard Gabriel and was troubled at his words, but there is no reference to anything seen (Luke 1.26–35). When angels are seen, they are often described as radiant or fiery. Daniel saw a man clothed in linen whose face was like lightning and whose eyes were like torches (Dan. 10.5–6). Although not named, Christian commentators identified him as the LORD (Hippolytus, *On Daniel*). A similar figure appeared to John and was identified as the LORD (Rev. 1.12–16). 'Seeing' angels is a familiar theme in Scripture.

Angels can be felt. Jacob wrestled with an angel (Gen. 32.24), and Job felt and heard a presence in the night (Job 4.12–17). Angels can also be tasted. 'Taste and see that the LORD is good' (Ps. 34.8) may originally have meant exactly that. Something which conveyed the Presence of the LORD had actually been eaten. The obvious food would have been the Bread of the Presence, and there is no doubt that a ritual meal of some sort had been eaten in the temple. The elders on Sinai who beheld God and then ate and drank (Exod. 24.11) must have had some counterpart in temple ritual, and the fact that the

Deuteronomists denied that God had been seen on Sinai ('you saw no form, there was only a voice', Deut. 4.12) alerts us as to what might have happened to this meal in the temple. The table for the Bread of the Presence was furnished with flagons and incense dishes, but no information survives as to how these were used (Exod. 25.29–30). The Bread, however, was 'most holy', like the perfumes (Lev. 24.9), so it, too, must have imparted holiness. Christians 'tasted the kindness of the LORD' (1 Pet. 2.3), which may be an allusion to Psalm 34.8: 'O taste and see that the LORD is good.' In a Greek-speaking context, this could have led to the wordplay between *chrestos* 'good' and Christ, such that the verse was understood to mean 'Taste and see that Christ is the LORD.'[38] Given the overall Hebraic context of 1 Peter, written to the 'exiles of the Diaspora' who were a 'chosen race and a royal priesthood' (1 Pet. 1.1; 2.9), the significance of their tasting the LORD should not be overlooked. This was not necessarily a Christian innovation, but could have been the Christian Eucharist perpetuating the ancient meal of the royal priesthood. The Letter to the Hebrews, which is steeped in temple imagery, also links tasting to the receiving of heavenly power. Those who have been enlightened are 'those who have tasted the heavenly gift, have become partakers of the holy Spirit, have tasted the goodness of the word[39] of God and the powers of the age to come' (Heb. 6.4–5). Psalm 34.8 (LXX, Ps. 33) did become the psalm sung at the Eucharist (*Apostolic Constitutions* 8 13 1, also Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses* 23.20; Jerome, *On Isaiah* 1.2).

Frequently, though, the angels make their presence known through sound or through perfume. The Roman pre-baptismal ritual known at the end of the fourth century CE, was the *effeta*, which opened the ears and the nostrils. Ambrose alludes to it:

> Open, therefore, your ears, and draw in the sweet savour of eternal life breathed on you by the office of the sacraments; which we indicated to you when in performing the mystery of the opening we said 'Ephpheta', which is, 'Be opened'. ... After this the holy of holies was unbarred to you, you did enter the shrine of regeneration ... (Ambrose, *On the Mysteries* I.3, II.5)

A similar text by an unknown author gives detail: 'Which mysteries of opening were performed when the priest touched your ears and nostrils?' (*On the Sacraments* I.2).[40] The priest imitates the miracle when Jesus restored the deaf man who had a speech impediment. He touched his ears, and then touched his tongue with saliva (Mk 7.31–35). 'Then the priest takes with his thumb of the saliva of his mouth and touches the ears and nostrils of the child, and while touching his right and left ears says "*Ephphatha*, that is be opened" then he touches the nostrils saying "For a savour of sweetness. But thou, devil, flee away for the judgement of God draws nigh" '.[41]

When angels are heard it is sometimes through speech, as when the

angel of the LORD called twice to Abraham (Gen. 22.11, 15), or when the angel of the LORD spoke to Samson's father (Judg. 13.16). An angel of the LORD spoke to Joseph in a dream (Matt. 1.20) and to the shepherds at Bethlehem (Luke 2.10). The angels at the tomb on Easter morning spoke to the women (Luke 24.5–7), and an angel of God spoke to Paul on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27.23).

More frequently, the sound of the angels is music, as making music was their heavenly role. There may be far more angel song in the Hebrew Scriptures than is at first apparent, for the Targum to 1 Chronicles 16.31[42] reads: 'Let the angels on high rejoice, and let the inhabitants of the earth rejoice', whereas the biblical text has only; 'Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice'.[43] Wherever the heavens sing or rejoice, we should understand that it was the angels. Psalm 19.1–3 is then a description of the inaudible praise of the angels throughout the creation and Psalm 148 is the praise of the angels linked to the establishing of the fixed order in the creation. The morning stars, the sons of God, made ringing cries as the foundations of the earth were set in place (Job 38.7) and the same two verbs (*rnn, rw'*) appear elsewhere in similar contexts. The heavens, the depths of the earth, the mountains and the trees of the forest sing as the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and spread out the earth, declares that Jerusalem and the temple will be rebuilt. This is the great renewal of the Day of Atonement; transgressions and sins have been swept away (Isa. 44.22) and Israel returns. The daughter of Zion sings when the LORD has taken away the judgements against her (Zeph. 3.14–20). The LORD renews[44] Zion with love, v.17. The psalmist tells how the whole creation, the heavens and the angels, the earth and its people, praise the LORD, 'for he commanded and they were created ... and he set a statute [*ḥq*, literally an engraved thing] that they should not pass over' (Ps. 148.6, my translation). A hitherto unknown psalm found at Qumran reads: 'He divided light from obscurity, he establishes the dawn by the knowledge of his heart. When all his angels saw it, they sang, for he showed them that which they had not known' (11Q 5 XXVI). The angel song accompanied the act of the creation; it may even have been a part of the act of creation.

The great angel Yahwehel/Iaoel who appeared to Abraham dressed as a high priest, was described as the 'Singer of the Eternal One' (*Ap. Abr.* 10.3). This seems to be a description of the Creator. He maintained the harmony of heaven by teaching the living creatures 'the song of peace which the Eternal One has in himself' and Abraham then heard 'the voice of their sanctification like the voice of a single man' (*Ap. Abr.* 18.11–14). David was described as the one who was raised up and anointed, the one through whom the Spirit of the LORD spoke, and then perhaps as '*the sweet singer of the praise songs*' of Israel. The Hebrew here is ambiguous, but had David been the Presence of the LORD with his

people, the mention of song in this context of anointing and raising up may not be just a reference to his traditional role as a composer of Psalms. Philo wrote similarly of the Logos who enabled the harmony of the creation and of the inaudible hymns of praise, which were all that the creation could offer to the Creator (*On Planting* 10, 126,131). Similarly the enigmatic Wisdom who was beside the LORD as he created, was described as *harmozousa*, the one who joins together, or the one who tunes a musical instrument (LXX, Prov. 8.30). The Eternal Holy One approached Abraham 'in the many voices of sanctification' (*Ap. Abr.* 16.3)[45] and the patriarch had to be taught to sing before he could stand among the angels. 'Isaiah' had a similar experience as he ascended through the seven heavens and he heard the praises of the angels (*Asc. Isa.* 6–11). 'Zephaniah' ascended to the fifth heaven where he saw 'Lords' singing hymns to the 'ineffable Most High God' (*Apoc. Zeph.*).[46] Enoch heard the angels singing the Name (*1 En.* 48.5). When he first ascended to stand before the throne, he did not have enough strength to sing the hymn, but after his eyes and heart had been enlightened, he was able to join in the Holy Holy Holy. When he sang, the heavenly beings responded (*3 En.* 1.10–12). To hear the heavenly music was dangerous, and anyone unworthy was punished or even destroyed. In the *Hekhalot Rabbati*, a collection of texts describing mystical ascents, there are warnings about the heavenly music: 'The voice of the first one: One who hears [this] voice will immediately go mad and tumble down. The voice of the second one: everyone who hears it immediately goes astray and does not return', (#104) and there are four more warnings.

Since Day One was the place of unity, the song of the angels had to be in harmony, and any defect was punished. They had to sing 'with one voice, with one speech, with one knowledge and with one sound. ... As there can be no earlier or later, no lower or higher for them, when they sang the hymn of sanctification before the king of the kings of kings.' (#185–6)[47] If the great song was not sung well or at the appointed time, the erring angels were consumed by the flames of their Creator (*3 En.* 47). The *Testament of Adam* gives a similar picture, with each hour of the day and night having its allotted place in the praise of the creation: the first hour of the day is for the heavenly ones, the second for the angels, the third for the birds, the fourth for the beasts and so forth. The song of the angels was the harmony of the creation, and there was only one theme – Holy Holy Holy. It was sung in response to the praises of Israel, the worship of the mortal creation being necessary to evoke the song of the angels.[48] This had been the song of the seraphim in Isaiah's vision, that the holiness of God filled the earth with glory (Isa. 6.3). This is the earliest reference to the cosmic significance of angel song, and *evidence that it was known in the first temple.*[49] The temple musicians *performed in unison*, 'with the voice of unity' when their music invoked the Glory of the LORD to fill the temple (2 Chron. 5.13–14).

The biblical texts show that the song of the angels accompanied the establishing of the creation, and so the renewal of the creation in the New Year rituals of Tabernacles was accompanied by, or perhaps enabled by, the song of the angels. A recurring theme is that the song is a 'new song', which should probably be understood to mean a 'renewing song', since the cognate verb *ḥdš* means to renew. Psalm 33 describes the music of the 'new song', and then how the creation was made by the word of the LORD. Psalm 96 exhorts all the earth to sing a 'new song' because the LORD reigns, the earth is established and the LORD is about to come to judge the world. Psalm 98 is similar; the 'new song' marks the victory of the LORD, the King, and the whole creation rejoices as he comes to judge the world. Psalm 144 describes the 'new song' for the LORD, who brings victory and prosperity. Psalm 149 is a 'new song' which brings victory over enemies. There is a 'new song' as the LORD, Creator of heaven and earth, restores and recreates his people (Isa. 42.10; 44.23; 49.13). The angels who sing at the Nativity are singing the new creation: Glory to God and peace on earth (Luke 2.14). In the Book of Revelation, there is a new song as the Lamb is enthroned and creates a kingdom of priests to reign on the earth (Rev. 5.9–10), and there is a new song in heaven (Rev. 14.3) as the most terrifying events on earth begin to unfold. The song of recreation is heard like the sound of many waters, and then the great Day of Atonement begins. The sevenfold angels of the high priesthood emerge with bowls, not of renewing life-blood but of wrath (Rev. 15–16) and the evil city is destroyed. A similar scene is recorded in the *Hekhalot Zutarti*, where the King on his throne is surrounded by heavenly beings: 'Your servants crown you with crowns and sing a new song to you. They install you as King for ever, and you shall be called One for ever and ever. (#418)'[50] This was the unity at the heart of the creation, Day One, and this was the enthronement of the King in the holy of holies.

The song of the angels appears in its original setting in the Book of Revelation. John sees the living creatures and the elders around the throne, i.e. in heaven/the holy of holies, and they sing first the song which Isaiah also heard: 'Holy Holy Holy, is the LORD God Almighty, who was and is and is to come' (Rev. 4.8), and then '... for thou didst create all things and by thy will they existed and were created' (Rev. 4.11). Both songs have the same theme, since the Palestinian Targums at Exodus 3.14 render the Name revealed to Moses at the burning bush as 'He who said to the world from the beginning "Be there" and it was there, and is to say to it "Be there" and it will be there.' In other words, underlying the Greek form of the song is the understanding that the Name meant not 'The One who was and is', but the one who created and will create.[51] The song in the holy of holies, the source of life, is the song which sustains the creation. Thus Simon the great high priest[52]

taught: By three things is the world sustained, by the Law, by the [temple] service and by deeds of loving kindness (*m. Aboth* 1.2). After the destruction of the temple, it was said that the 'Holy Holy Holy' maintained the world (*b. Sot.* 49a). Enoch heard the music of the living creatures and the cherubim when their 'Holy Holy Holy' flowed out from heaven like rivers of joy and rejoicing, gladness and love (*3 En.* 22B). The sound of the ministering angels singing the Holy Holy Holy caused turmoil in the cosmos, just as the sons of God had sung as the foundations of the earth were set in place (*3 En.* 38.1–3; Job 38.7).

The song of the angels also invokes the Presence. According to the *Merkavah Rabbah*, the angels who serve before the throne 'remember' the Name, but this verb *zkr* can also mean invoke, and it may be that this is a more appropriate translation. 'Blessed be the praise of your name, and the song of your strength and your remembrance [*invocation*]. In the praise of your name is revealed the secret of wisdom, and in the song of your remembrance [*invocation*] are disclosed the mysteries of mysteries and the gates of understanding' (#676). 'One who "knows" the name of God and "mentions" [*invokes*] it in praise [cf. the frequent use of the root *zakhar*, which always refers to the Name], gains access to previously unknown and unobtainable sources of knowledge and understanding.' (#590)[53] The *Ma'aseh Merkavah* describes the throne itself, as well as its attendants, remembering (invoking) the Name: '... the Ophannim of majesty and the Seraphim of flame and the *galgalim* [circles] of the merkavah utter [*invoke*] the Name of God with a voice of great roaring'.[54] *That the angels in heaven invoke the Presence is of great importance for understanding the priestly rituals of the holy of holies, and thus for tracing the roots of the* epiklesis.

Angels are also perceived through perfume, and so sacred were the perfumes of the tabernacle in ancient Israel that anyone who abused them or imitated them for private or personal use was 'cut of from his people' (Exod. 30.38). This was almost certainly because the presence of the LORD was believed to manifest itself by perfume. The verse usually translated 'I take no delight in your solemn assemblies' can also be read 'I shall not give forth perfume in your solemn assemblies' (Amos 5.21b).[55] When Solomon consecrated the temple, according to Josephus, an immense quantity of incense was burned 'and this till the very air itself around was so full of these odours ... that it was an indication of God's presence ... and of his habitation with them in this newly built and consecrated place' (*Ant.* 8.4).[56] Perfume continued to be understood in this way in the Church. Gregory of Nyssa, writing in the mid-fourth century CE, explained that there were two sets of senses, one corporeal and the other spiritual. 'The smell of the divine perfumes does not proceed from the smell of our nostrils, but from a spiritual faculty which draws in the sweet odour of Christ by an inhalation of the Spirit' (*On the Song of Songs* 780–81).[57]

In the tabernacle, the Presence had been depicted as the incense where the LORD appeared (Exod. 30.36; Lev.16.2), and the Spirit was given with the perfumed anointing oil. Those objects or persons in contact with the oil became not simply holy, but most holy, that is, they themselves became a source of holiness because they had acquired divinity (Exod. 30.29).[58] Wisdom, because she was another aspect of the LORD, also described her presence as the perfume of the incense and the anointing oil: 'Like cassia and camel's thorn, I gave forth the aroma of spices, and like choice myrrh I spread a pleasant odour, like galbanum, onycha, and stacte, and like the fragrance of frankincense in the tabernacle' (*Ben Sira* 24.15). When the king was anointed with the perfumed oil, he was given the manifold gifts of the Spirit/Wisdom: 'The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his *perfume* shall be in the fear of the LORD' (Isa. 11.2–3). When Enoch was anointed and resurrected as an angel, he recognized the perfume of sweet myrrh as he was transformed into an angel (*2 Enoch* 22). Paul wrote of 'the fragrance of the knowledge ... the aroma of the anointed one' (2 Cor. 2.14–15). Ignatius explained to the Christians of Ephesus: 'The reason for the LORD's acceptance of the precious ointment on his head was to exhale the fragrance of incorruptibility upon his church' (*Eph.* 17). The significance of the myrrh oil in temple ritual was not forgotten; St Leo explained the significance of the gift of myrrh to the infant Jesus: 'He who offers myrrh believes that God's only begotten Son united to himself man's true nature' (*Sermon 6*, Epiphany). Similarly with the anointing after baptism, which, said Dionysius, 'gives sweet odour to the one who has been initiated, for the perfect divine birth joins the initiates together with the Spirit of the Deity (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 404C). The ascent of the righteous soul is described in the same way in the Zohar. As each stands before the angel Suriah 'he inhales its scent, as it says: "He will inhale the scent of the fear of the LORD" (Isa. 11.3)'. The angel then permits the soul to ascend further (Zohar, *Exodus* 213b).

Those who had already become holy ones, angels, saints, before their physical death could be recognized by this perfume of the angels. At the martyrdom of Bishop Polycarp in 155 CE those present 'became aware of a delicious fragrance, like the odour of incense or other precious gums' (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 15). The martyrs of Viennne and Lyons, some twenty years later, went to their death 'perfumed also with the sweet savour of Christ, so that some people thought they had smeared themselves with worldly cosmetics' (Eusebius, *History* 5.1). When the body of St Simeon Stylites was found by his disciple Anthony, it was giving forth the perfume of spices, and it was reported that the body of St Gregory Nazianzen was identified in his family vault by its perfume.

St Gregory the Great described the death of his friend Servulus, who cried out:

'Do you not hear the beautiful hymns resounding in heaven?', and as he turned his mind to follow the melodies resounding within him, his soul was freed from his body. At its departure, a fragrant odour spread through the room, giving all a sense of indescribable delight. They were now assured that the choirs of heaven had received him into their company. (*Dialogue* 4.15)

There are similar accounts throughout Christian history,[59] and the perfume of the saints is still today a recognized sign of sanctity, the angel state.[60] A Valentinian Gnostic text used the same imagery of perfume to explain how human life/breath receives the divine:

The children of the Father are his fragrance ... For this reason the Father loves his fragrance and manifests it in every place, and if it mixes with matter, he gives his fragrance to the light, and in his repose he causes it to surpass every form [and] every sound. For it is not the ears that smell the fragrance but the breath that has the sense of smell and attracts the fragrance to itself and is submerged in the fragrance of the Father. (*Gospel of Truth* CG I.3.34)

Priests

An important preliminary to any consideration of priesthood has to be the question of high priesthood, and especially of the relationship between the Melchizedek high priesthood, favoured by the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews, and the Aaronite high priesthood, which was deemed superseded (Heb. 7.11–17). Any hypothesis depends on the dates assigned to texts. It is possible to make a good case for there being no reference to Moses or to the Aaron high priesthood in pre-exilic texts.[61] It is also possible that the crucial Melchizedek Psalm (110/109) was a very late second temple composition. In other words, either of the two high priesthoods could be presented as a second temple innovation. It is a fact, though, that the Yeb texts, which describe a community who worshipped the LORD in southern Egypt in the fifth century BCE, often mention priests, but never mention the familiar biblical names of Aaron or Levi. The 'surface' picture of the Aaronite high priesthood in the Old Testament, therefore, must be treated with caution. On the other hand, since the Melchizedek high priest was a divine saviour figure at Qumran (11QMelch), and this community saw itself as the guardian of the true traditions when Israel had gone astray, the relationship between the royal Melchizedek priesthood and the Aaronite priesthood must be significant. The Christians restored the Melchizedek priesthood, along with a great deal else from the first temple. We can only guess, given the other elements from the older temple that were restored in the Church, what the Christians knew and

why they acted as they did. Suffice it to say that New Testament scholars who suggest that Jesus was identified as the Melchizedek high priest because it was clear that he did not come from the family of Levi are unhelpful,[62] and unlikely to advance our knowledge of Christian origins.

It has been suggested that the conflicting claims to priesthood in the second temple period were reflected in the myth of the fallen angels,[63] although it is not easy to give a detailed reconstruction. The form of the myth in *1 Enoch* 6–11 condemns the knowledge revealed by the angels, but elsewhere, it is implied that the knowledge was only corrupted when the angels married human wives (*1 En.* 18.14–19.2: Enoch saw the punishment of the stars/angels who had rebelled). Enoch, the high priest figure, was himself given the heavenly knowledge (*1 En.* 41, 43, 60), and the Astronomy Book (*1 En.* 72–82) is an example of what this detailed knowledge would have been. In the *Jubilees* version of the myth (*Jub.* 5.1–2) the angels marry human women and then the creation is corrupted; no detail of the knowledge is given. The *Testament of Levi* 14.1 mentions an *Enoch* text not longer extant which predicts that the priests will go astray in the last days, their major sins being sexual: marriage to forbidden women, fornication and sodomy. The myth of the fallen angels was used by the priestly community at Qumran (CD II), and by the Christians, who considered themselves the new royal priesthood (2 Pet. 2.4–22; Jude 14–16). What is clear from a comparative study is that the myth was old, and was the basis of arguments in the second temple period.[64]

The two key issues for the priesthood were purity and the use of knowledge, and those deemed to be impure or to have abused their knowledge were described as the fallen angels. There may even have been the question of celibacy: Jesus' definition of angels, that they do not marry because they are resurrected and are sons of God (Luke 20.35–36), must be relevant to the Christians' understanding of themselves as the new angel priesthood. Similarly, there is the contrast between the Levitical priesthood, attained by bodily descent, and the Melchizedek priesthood (which the Christians claimed) attained by resurrection, being 'raised up' with the 'the power of an indestructible life' (Heb. 7.11–16). Pliny's famous description of the Essenes, as a tribe without women, who have only palm trees for company, and who renew their number by recruiting people 'tired of life' (*Natural History* 5.15) must have been what was popularly believed at the end of the first century CE, and so the marriages of the fallen angels may well have been understood not as a condemnation of impure marriages, but as a condemnation of marriage itself for those who were or had become angels.[65]

Priestly marriage was associated with abuse of Wisdom, and it cannot be coincidence that the older cult had regarded Wisdom as the heavenly

spouse of the royal high priests. The holy of holies was described as the bridal chamber, and in the *Gospel of Philip*, this was the place where the Father united with the Virgin in the place of fire (CG II.3.71). Perhaps having a human wife, or continuing with a human wife after achieving the angel state, had been deemed an abuse of Wisdom. 'Solomon' declared that he had sought Wisdom as his bride (*Wisd.* 8.2), and it is reasonable to ask the origin of this vivid imagery of union with Wisdom. The Rechabites may be relevant here. They were a priestly group who claimed to have fled from Jerusalem at the end of the first temple period, and lived a monastic life, mortals but 'purified and spotless' with 'sight fixed continuously on the light of the future life'. They married but only lived with their wives until two children had been conceived; thereafter they were celibate. Their clothing was 'a covering of glory' and the angels of God lived among them (*History of the Rechabites*[66] chapters 10–11). There is much speculation about these Rechabites, but they remain a mystery. The 'sons of Rechab' could indicate that they were devotees of the 'chariot'[67] throne in the temple, and people of that name frequented the temple in the first century CE. It was a Rechabite who tried to help James the leader of the Jerusalem Church, when he was attacked and killed in the temple.[68] They could have been a priestly group of 'angels' who practised the traditional 'angel' marriage.

The Angel High Priest

Throughout the second temple period the high priests were described as angels. [69] Going back century by century, the evidence is consistent. When Philo translated Leviticus 16.17, usually understood to mean that there was no man with the high priest when the priest entered the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement, he wrote: 'He is not a man when he enters the holy place to make atonement.' In the middle of the first century CE, and therefore contemporary with Christian origins, Philo understood the high priest to be an angel (*On Dreams* 2.189, 231). At this time too, there was in existence a text which described Isaac's blessing of his grandson Levi; 'May the LORD give you and your seed very great honour [to understand his glory].[70] May he draw you and your seed near to him from all flesh to serve in his sanctuary as the angels of the presence and the holy ones' (*Jub.* 31.14). Another described Levi's own last words to his sons: 'The Most High has given heed to your prayer that you be delivered from wrongdoing, that you should become a son to him, as minister and priest in his presence' (*T. Levi* 4.2). In the first century BCE,[71] Aristeas wrote of the other-worldly glory of the high priest: 'the appearance [of the vestments] makes one awe struck and dumbfounded; one would think he had come out of this world and into another one' (Aristeas 99). The glory of the high priest Simon as he

emerged from the temple was said by Ben Sira[72] to be like the morning star and the rainbow among the clouds. His very presence made the court of the sanctuary glorious, and it is by no means clear whom the people were worshipping when they fell to the ground in his presence (*Ben Sira* 50.5–21). Commentators have noted that the likeness of the Glory of the LORD in Ezekiel's vision was compared to a rainbow in the clouds (Ezek. 1.28), and so the comparison must be significant in the description of Simon.[73] A century or so before this, about 300 BCE, the Greek writer Hecataeus had described the Jewish high priest in a very similar way. 'The high priest ... is an angel to them of God's commandments.' When he speaks to them, the Jews 'immediately fall to the ground and worship [*proskunein*] the high priest as he explains the commandments to them.'[74]

Similar again is the latest canonical text about the role of the priests: Malachi, whose very name means 'My angel', gave oracles from the LORD against the priests of his day: 'The lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the angel/messenger of the LORD of Hosts' (Mal. 2.7). This collection of oracles at the end of the Book of the Twelve Prophets cannot be dated with certainty, but their concern with widespread divorce suggests a setting in the aftermath of the divorces imposed by Nehemiah (Neh. 13.23–31). The angel priest of this oracle would have lived about a century earlier than the one described by Hecataeus, in other words, about 400 BCE. Go back yet one more century and we are, very approximately, in the time of Zechariah. In one of his temple visions (Zech. 3.1–10), he described the vesting of the high priest Joshua, whose right to that office was disputed. He saw Joshua standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan accusing him. The angel, presumably the Angel of the LORD, commanded one of those standing before him to take away Joshua's filthy garments and clothe him in clean rich apparel. The garment is a *poderes*, the garment worn by the risen LORD as he stood amidst the seven lamps in John's vision. Joshua is assured that, if he keeps the Law of the LORD, he has the right to rule his temple, and to have access to the place of the angels, the presence of the LORD. This was the holy of holies. *Note, however, that Joshua is only vested with the splendid garments; he is not anointed.* Leviticus probably reached its present form at about this time, and it gives an ambiguous description of the high priests and the Glory. 'Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting; and when they came out, they blessed the people, and the Glory of the LORD appeared to all the people' (Lev. 9.23). Was it the appearance of the priests that was the Glory of the LORD? There is no way of knowing, but over the entire period of the second temple, the evidence for the high priest as an angel is consistent, and he was almost certainly the Angel of the Presence. In the Book of Revelation John the prophet was told not to worship the angel who

appeared to him, because both he and the angel were fellow servants of God (Rev. 19.10; 22.8–9). In the opening vision, however, when he saw the risen LORD dressed as an angel high priest, he was not rebuked when he fell down in worship (Rev. 1.17).

The angel high priest would not have begun his human life in that way, and so the next question has to be: *when and where had this transformation taken place*? The account of Israel's history in *1 Enoch* shows that certain people were believed to have changed into angels. The convention of the apocalyptic writings is to describe mortals as animals and angels as 'men', familiar in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25.31ff.), or the account of the man Gabriel coming to Daniel as he was praying (Dan. 9.21), or the men in white at the tomb on Easter morning. The Enoch histories describe how Noah was born a bull and, after learning secrets from the four men in white garments, became a man (*1 En.* 89.1); and how Moses was born a white sheep and became a man after standing before the LORD on Sinai (*1 En.* 89.36). The ancient kings in Jerusalem, as we have seen, became divine at their enthronement; Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king (1 Chron. 29.23), and the people worshipped the LORD, the king (1 Chron. 29.20). The psalmist described the procession of his God and king in the holy place (Ps. 68.24). As the figure of Moses absorbed so many of the older royal traditions during the second temple period, Philo's description of Moses' experience on Sinai is probably an echo of this ancient belief: 'He was named God and King of the whole nation and entered, we are told, into the darkness where God was, that is, into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of all existing things. And there he beheld what is hidden from the sight of mortal nature . . .' (*Moses* 1.158). Moses on Sinai had entered the holy of holies. Elsewhere Philo described this as Moses' 'second birth better than the first' (*Questions on Exodus* 2.46). Later writers also described this experience as Moses' rebirth, for example Cosmas Indicopleustes in the sixth century CE:

> Then having taken him up into the mountain, he hid him in a cloud and took him out of all earthly things . . . and he gave him a new birth as if he were a child in the womb . . . and revealed to him all that he had done in making the world in six days . . . showing him in six days the making of the world, performing in his presence the work of each day . . .[75]

This process of apotheosis must have taken place in the holy of holies, because angels were created on Day One, and the holy of holies was Day One in the temple pattern of correspondences.[76] The Hebrew Scriptures are reticent about this ritual, and later texts were at pains[77] to show that the angels were not created on Day One. There must have been a reason for this, possibly because the creation of the angels was a part of the royal cult of the Immanuel which the temple 'reformers' had

sought to suppress. Wisdom also had been 'brought forth' before the visible world was formed (Prov. 8.22–31), and Wisdom was an important element in the making of the high priest. Potentially interesting texts in the Hebrew Scriptures are now opaque, and this raises certain questions about how they came to be so. Psalm 110 (LXX, 109) is a clear example: the Hebrew of v. 3 is impossible; the Greek describes the making of the high priest Melchizedek, who was born as the LORD's son in the glory of the holy ones. The rest of the verse is unclear even in the Greek, but the same theme appears in the Messianic Rule from Qumran: 'When God begets the Messiah ...' (1 QSa II).[78] Had the anointed one been 'born' in the holy of holies, among the angel hosts, this would give a context for the well-known but opaque text in Isaiah 9.6 as a song of the angels: 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. ... And his name shall be the Angel of Great Counsel' (LXX). This could have been the setting for Psalm 89.19ff., where David was raised up, anointed, and made the Firstborn, who addressed God as his Father, and it could also have been the setting for the last words of David 'the man who was raised on high' and anointed so that the Spirit of the LORD spoke through him, and he shone on his people like the sun on a cloudless morning (2 Sam. 23.1–2). The king-making in ancient Israel was part of the New Year festival in the autumn, and so it is significant that the early Church celebrated the birth of Jesus at that time of the year, and used Scripture readings drawn form the Jewish New Year lectionary. The ancient Armenian Church kept the festival of the birth of Christ on the Day of Atonement.[79]

Becoming an Angel

There is surprisingly little evidence in the Hebrew Scriptures for the process of making and vesting a priest or a high priest. What is clear is that high priest and priest were more than distinctions of seniority; two separate institutions seem to have been joined together. This is evident in both Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8: Aaron and his sons were anointed on their heads with oil, and then Aaron and his sons were anointed with a mixture of oil and blood on the right ear, the right thumb and the big toe of the right foot. It has been suggested that these two rituals were originally distinct, the one for the Jerusalem priesthood and the other for the guardians of the rural holy places.[80] The high priests also wore different vestments from the other priests, they alone were permitted to enter the holy of holies, and they alone were permitted even to see the furnishings of the tabernacle (Num. 4.1–15).[81] They alone wore the sacred Name on their foreheads, they alone ate the shewbread (Lev. 24.9, although later this was eaten by all the priests, *m. Menaḥoth* 11.7). They alone carried the blood into the holy of holies on the Day of

Atonement (Lev. 16). No explanation of the rituals or vestments is given in the canonical texts (with one exception, as we shall see), and no further details, but this meagre evidence is sufficient to suggest that high priesthood was very different from priesthood. It would seem that what we know as the high priesthood evolved from the Melchizedek priesthood of the non-Deuteronomic strand in the Old Testament.

Later texts may have preserved accurate memories of the ancient practices and their significance. There are, for example, descriptions in *The Testament of Levi*, a text which exists in various forms. Fragments of it have been found at Qumran dated to the end of the second century BCE, but the fullest form of the text probably has Christian interpolations,[82] and so should be used with caution. It would, though, be interesting to speculate why Christian scribes thought it worthwhile to update this text for Christian use! In the *Testament*, Levi has a vision in which an angel invites him to enter the heavens. The angel tells him that when he stands before the LORD in the third heaven, he will be a priest, able to 'tell forth the LORD's mysteries to men' (*T. Levi* 2.10). This is the messenger/angel element of the high priesthood. A later vision describes how Levi is vested as a priest (*T. Levi* 8.1–10). Seven 'men in white', that is, angels, invite him to put on the vestments, each with its own significance: the crown of righteousness, the oracle of understanding, the robe of truth, the breastplate of faith, and so on. The exact nature of these items is not clear as the names differ from one text to another. Then the process of vesting is described: the first angel anoints him and gives him a staff; the second washes him with pure water, feeds him bread and wine and puts on him the holy and glorious garment; the third puts on a linen garment; the fourth offers a purple girdle; the fifth a branch of olive wood; the sixth a wreath for his head; and the seventh places the priestly crown on his head and puts incense into his hands. This ritual corresponds in part to those described in the Pentateuch, but there is no reference in the *Testament* to any sacrifice nor to smearing with blood. In the Pentateuch, there is no reference to the staff nor the wine nor the branch of olive wood, nor the incense. The detail of the ritual in the *Testament*, for example that it is performed by angels, does resemble the description of Joshua's vesting in Zechariah's vision. It also resembles Christian baptism, and, in view of their custom of marking on the forehead with a cross and their claim to be the new royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2.9), the Christians must have believed that they were the angel priesthood. Thus in the *Clementine Recognitions* we read that they are no longer purified by the blood of beasts, but 'by the purification of the Wisdom of God', an ancient priestly motif (*Rec.* 1.39).

The most striking description of vesting and anointing is found in *2 Enoch*, the Slavonic Enoch, where Enoch the archetypal high priest ascends through ten heavens and stands before the LORD who is

enthroned amidst the cherubim and seraphim. What follows resembles the account of Joshua's vesting, but the scene is described by the high priest himself, rather than by a prophet observing the scene. *This is what was believed to happen when the high priest was vested and anointed.*

> The LORD said 'Let Enoch come up and stand in front of my face for ever' and the glorious ones did obeisance and said 'Let him come up'. The LORD said to Michael 'Take Enoch and take him from his earthly clothing and anoint him with the delightful oil and put him into the clothes of glory.' And Michael took me from my clothes, he anointed me with the delightful oil and the appearance of that oil is greater than the greatest light, its ointment like sweet dew and its fragrance like myrrh. And its shining is like the sun. And I gazed at all of myself, and I had become like one of the glorious ones and there was no observable difference. (*2 En.* 22)[83]

This extraordinary text is the only extant interpretation of the vesting and anointing, the two elements of making the high priest. The process of passing from earthly to heavenly life was indicated by the change of garments, from earthly clothing to garments of glory, and the oil conferred the Spirit, Wisdom, Divinity. In other words, Enoch the high priest was resurrected and transformed into an angel by his consecration as a high priest. It is one of the complications of the Hebrew Scriptures that to consecrate, as in the English, is literally 'to make holy', but Hebrew has the added complication that angels can be known as holy ones. When a high priest was consecrated, he was literally *made into a holy one*. Moses' radiant face as he came down from Sinai (Exod. 34.29–35) is an early example of this belief in apotheosis, and also an early example of Moses absorbing the traditions of the temple.

The Oil

The anointing oil was one of the symbols of apotheosis. Memories of the old cult embedded in later texts show that the oil had conferred divinity, and so the LORD and the Messiah were equivalent terms. The oil had, however, disappeared from use at the end of the first temple period. This is consistent with other evidence of changes in the temple at that time. The oil had been kept in the holy of holies,[84] but had been hidden away in the time of Josiah, along with the ark, the manna and Aaron's rod (*b. Horayoth* 12a). This tradition, preserved only in non-biblical material, is confirmed by the detail in Zechariah 3, where Joshua, the high priest after the return from exile, was vested in the holy of holies, but he was not anointed (Zech. 3.1–10).[85]

The oil was extracted from the tree of life, one of the symbols of Wisdom (Prov. 3.18),[86] and fragments in later tradition suggest that this tree had been represented by the menorah. At the first stage of initiation she gave light as the tree of life and her devotees saw her, but when they ascended to the holy of holies, she was given in the anointing oil,[87]

opened the eyes and gave eternal life.[88] This was marriage in the holy of holies, the bridal chamber. Those who received Wisdom became angels, and they were initiated into the angels' knowledge. They 'knew' Wisdom. As the newly anointed stood in Day One, he saw the whole process of creation and the pattern of history.[89] This was how the royal high priest had been 'born' in the holy of holies beyond time; Melchizedek was the priest of eternity. The same idea was expressed in a different way in the *Parables of Enoch*, where the Chosen One was named with the Name 'before the beginning of days, before the creation of sun and moon, before the creation of the stars' (*1 En.* 48.2–3).[90] After he had become an angel in this way, Enoch was shown the days of the creation just as Wisdom must have seen them. She described her birth before the visible world had been created, and then how she was beside the Creator as the world was formed and made (Prov. 8.23–31). Moses, too, had seen the six days during his six days on Sinai, according to later tradition.[91]

The angels, such as the high priests became, were proverbially wise. When the woman of Tekoa flattered King David, she told him: 'My LORD has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all things that are on earth' (2 Sam. 14.20). The evil angels who are judged by God in the heavenly council 'have neither knowledge nor understanding and they walk in darkness' (Ps. 82.5). The serpent in the Genesis Eden must have described accurately the ways of the older priesthood; when their eyes were opened, they became as wise as the *'elohim* (Gen. 3.5). *Note that the story of the expulsion of the priests of the old temple condemns the Wisdom that characterized their priesthood.*[92]

In the second century BCE, Ben Sira could still describe Wisdom as the archetype of the high priests, the one who served in the holy tabernacle on Zion (*Ben Sira* 24.10). *He also described Wisdom as the anointing oil itself*, a sweet perfume of myrrh, cinnamon and olive oil, and she was compared to the incense of galbanum, onycha, stacte, and frankincense. The implication must have been that when the high priest was anointed, he received Wisdom herself, oil from the tree of life, together with her gifts of true life, vision, knowledge and wealth.[93] He was anointed on his head and 'between his eyelids',[94] which must have symbolized the opening of his eyes. Hence the figurative language in the Enochic *Apocalypse of Weeks*: when Wisdom was abandoned, in the time of Josiah, and when the oil was hidden away, those in the temple lost their sight (*1 En.* 93.8).

As an angel, almost certainly the Angel of Great Counsel in view of his Wisdom, the high priest brought teaching from heaven to earth, and the people knelt before him to receive it. This must underlie the now opaque lines in Proverbs 30.1–4, which have been reconstructed as:

For I surpass all men and have the discernment of Adam. God has surely given me Wisdom and I know the knowledge of the holy ones. Who has ascended to the clouds

and come down, and who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has caught up the waters in his garment and established the ends of the earth? What is his name and what is the name of his son? Surely, you know.[95]

However the finer detail is reconstructed, the meaning is clear enough, *as is the disordered state of the text*. Given the tendencies of the second temple editors, the one undoubtedly explains the other. The messianic prophecy in Isaiah 11 must have had a similar setting: 'The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.' That text continues, as we have seen: 'His fragrance shall be the fear of the LORD'.

Memories of the gift of Wisdom in the fragrant oil appear as apparently detached fragments in a variety of early Christian and Gnostic texts. The oil was linked not simply to the receiving of the Spirit as king or priest or prophet, but also to apotheosis, eternal life, knowledge and Wisdom, which had been a part of the temple tradition. This material is compelling evidence both for the ancient belief and for the importance of temple tradition in the early years of the Church. Thus John wrote: 'You have the chrism from the Holy One and you all know ... you have no need for anyone to teach you anything' (1 John 2.20, 27). And how else are we to explain the conjunction of images in the *Odes of Solomon*? 'My eyes were enlightened and my face received the dew, And my breath[96] was refreshed with the pleasant fragrance of the LORD' (*Ode* 11.14–15); or 'He anointed me with his perfection, And I became as one of those who are near him' (*Ode* 36.6). The date and origin of the *Odes* are not known, but there can be no doubt about the Epiphany Sermons of St Leo the Great. Interpreting the three gifts, he said: 'He offers myrrh who believes that God's only begotten Son united to himself man's true nature' (*Sermon* 6). This is the meaning of the ancient anointing: the LORD became Immanuel. In the *Apostolic Constitutions* the thanksgiving over the ointment is for the fragrance of the ointment and the immortality made known by Jesus (*Ap. Con.* 7.27). When the newly baptized was anointed, the priest prayed that the one who had died with Christ might arise and live with him (*Ap. Con.* 7.44). The perfume has become 'the sweet odour of the knowledge of the gospel'. Cyril of Jerusalem taught that the baptized 'became Christs by receiving the anti-type of the Holy Spirit' (*Catecheses* 25.1).[97] Dionysius devoted a whole chapter to the Rite of the Ointment (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 472C–485B) and emphasized the illumination aspect from ancient Wisdom. 'It spreads its sweet fragrance into their mental reception ... the transcendent fragrance of the divine Jesus distributes its conceptual gifts over our own intellectual powers' (476c, 477c).

So-called Gnostic practices also knew of the oil. The Ophite Gnostics were transformed into 'sons of the Father' when they

received the 'seal'. The one conducting the ritual was the Father and the recipient was the son, who declared: 'I have been anointed with the white chrism which flows from the tree of life' (Origen, *Celsus* 6.27). Irenaeus described a Valentinian ritual of initiation, which was accompanied by words in Hebrew. It was a spiritual marriage that began with a baptism in the name of a Trinity: the Unknown Father and the Mother and the One who descended on Jesus. Others invoked the One known as Light, Spirit and Life. Others proclaimed over the initiate the Name hidden from every divinity, Lordship and truth which Jesus had put on in the zones of light, the name Christ, immediately identified as the name Iao. Finally, the initiate was anointed with the myrrh oil, to represent the perfume which is above all things (*Against Heresies* 1.21.3). This seems to be an echo of the ritual in the holy of holies: the Father, the Mother and the gift of the Spirit in the oil, which transformed the initiate into the LORD, the child of Wisdom.

There are many references in the Zohar to the oil and its powers, which reflect the temple tradition as it can be reconstructed from older sources. The oil for the candlestick symbolises the Holy Spirit (*Zohar Exodus* 139a).

'Oil for the candlestick', this symbolizes the supernal oil, which emanates from above. It has two names: 'The oil of the light' (Exod. 39.37) and 'The oil for the light'. The former is the one above, the latter the one below. The former never ceases to flow. It is always full of holiness and blessing ... (Zohar Exodus 148a)

Most remarkable is the explanation of the relationship between Wisdom, the oil and the tree of life.

TAKE AARON AND HIS SONS WITH HIM, AND THE GARMENTS. Rabbi Hiya quoted here the verse: 'For with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light we see light' (Ps. 36.9). The fountain of life, he said, is the supernal oil which flows continually and is stored in the midst of the most high Wisdom, from which it never separates. It is the source which dispenses life to the supernal tree and kindles the lights. And that tree is called the Tree of Life because it is planted on account of that source of life. (Zohar Leviticus 34b)

Adam and Eve leaving the Garden of Eden has long been recognized as a description of the high priest being expelled from the first temple; Adam was original high priest and Eve was Wisdom. *Jubilees* records how Adam burned the most holy incense of the sanctuary as he left Eden (*Jub.* 3.27, cf. Exod. 30.34ff.); elsewhere, we are told that he brought from Eden the seeds for the incense shrubs (*Life of Adam and Eve* 29.5). Other stories told how the dying Adam sent Eve and Seth back to Paradise, to beg for some oil from the tree of life. Michael met them and said that the precious oil could not be given until the last days, when all flesh would be raised up and healed.[98] This oil from the tree,

which had formerly anointed and 'raised up' the high priest/king, was remembered as the means of resurrection. This motif appears also in the *Gospel of Philip*, and, despite its being an enigmatic and at times fragmented text, the gist is clear. Creation in the material world had been a process of separation, culminating in the separation of Adam from Eve, as described in Genesis. Adam had to recover what he had lost by returning to Eve, who was remembered as Wisdom, the source of life. It was 'her' oil from the tree that gave resurrection/rebirth. 'When Eve was still in Adam, death did not exist. When she was separated from him, death came into being. If [Adam] enters again and attains his former self, death will be no more.' 'Through the Holy Spirit we are indeed begotten again ... we are anointed through the Spirit, and when we were begotten, we were united ...' 'Those who say we will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection when they live, when they die they will receive nothing.' 'The tree of life is in the midst of the Garden and the olive tree from which the chrism is made by him for the resurrection' (CG II.3.69–73).[99] The treatise *On the Origin of the World* (CG II.5.111) described 'the olive tree which was to purify the kings and high priests of righteousness who were to appear in the last days, since the olive tree appeared out of the light of the first Adam for the sake of the unguent that they were to receive'. Origen knew of Ophite Gnostics who believed they were transformed into sons of the Father when they were anointed with white salve from the tree of life (*Celsus* 6.27). In the *Clementine Recognitions*, Peter explained to Clement the meaning of the word Christ: 'The Son of God, the beginning of all things, became Man. Him first God anointed with oil which was taken from the wood of the Tree of Life', and Christ would himself anoint all pious when they entered His kingdom. 'In the present life, Aaron, the first high priest, was anointed with a composition of chrism, which was made after the pattern of the spiritual ointment ...'; 'If then this temporal grace, compounded by men, had such efficacy, consider how potent was that ointment extracted by God from a branch of the tree of life ...' (*Clem. Rec.* 1.45–46).[100] Thus the high priest was the Christ, the one anointed in the beginning in the holy of holies, and he would himself anoint with the oil of Wisdom to give healing and eternal life.

The fragrant tree appears in the Enoch tradition. It was near the throne, a tree whose 'fragrance was beyond all fragrance' (*1 En.* 24.4), and Michael told Enoch that no mortal could touch the great tree until after the judgement. Then it would be brought back to the temple,[101] and its fruits given to the righteous and holy ones, 'into the holy place they shall enter, and its fragrance shall be in their bones, and they shall live a long life on earth ...' (*1 En.* 25.5–7; cf. 2 Cor. 2.16: a fragrance from life to life, and Rev. 2.7; 22.4: access to the tree for the faithful). In *2 Enoch*, the tree of life grows in the third heaven, a tree of indescribable

fragrance and beauty, 'gold-looking and crimson, and with the form of fire' (*2. En.* 8.4).

These were ancient beliefs, looking back to the lost temple as the lost garden, but the polemics in Deuteronomy have overlaid and obscured the priestly traditions of the first temple. Deuteronomy has no place for the Day of Atonement, nor for the angel hosts,[102] nor for Wisdom. The only information about the monarchy is that the king has to have a copy of Deuteronomy at hand at all times (Deut. 17.18–20). The great feast in Deuteronomy's calendar is the Passover, the feast of Moses, and, incidentally, the sacrifice not offered by the priests (Exod. 12.6; *m. Pesaḥim* 5.5–6). When the high priest ascended to heaven/entered the holy of holies, he would have crossed whatever it was that represented the sea of ice or crystal around the heavenly throne. In Deuteronomy such ascents are deemed unnecessary:

> The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children, that we may do all the words of this law ... for this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that you should say 'Who will go up for us to heaven and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?' (Deut. 29.29; 30.11–13)

There are several places in the Hebrew Scriptures where we cannot be certain whether the holy ones in the text are angels or humans. An ancient title for the LORD was the Holy One of Israel (throughout Isaiah), that is, the Angel of Israel, and the theme of one of the great law codes is that this Holy One communicated his holiness (Lev. 21.8): 'You shall be holy ones as I the LORD your God am a Holy One' (Lev.19.2). *Heaven and earth blend into one in the temple setting*; 'The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven', sang the Psalmist (Ps. 11.4) and presumably that is what he believed. So what are we reading in Deuteronomy 33.2, the LORD coming with ten thousands of his holy ones? It is apparently an account of how the LORD became King, but this could have been an enthronement in Jerusalem when the king became the LORD. Who, then might have been the ten thousand holy ones who accompanied him? By the time of Zechariah, this was clearly a future hope for the advent of the LORD with his angels (Zech. 14.5), but had this always been a future hope? Was this not 'realized eschatology' as temple ritual? This is the original setting of the Cherubic hymn, a setting which has passed directly into the liturgy: '... that we may receive the King of all, invisibly escorted by the hosts of angels ...'.[103]

What temple ritual of enthronement might have inspired, or been inspired by, Psalm 89? The LORD in the assembly of the holy ones (Ps. 89.5, 7) followed by the raising up and anointing of the one who was to call his God his Father? Who are 'the holy ones in the land/on earth'

(Ps. 16.3)? And who are those exhorted to 'Look to the LORD and shine'? His holy ones have nothing to fear; they are invited to taste and see that the LORD is good (Ps. 34.5–9). These must have been the angel priests. Job was mocked by Eliphaz; 'Which of the holy ones will answer your questions?' (Job 5.1). Was Job accustomed to ask angels, or to consult priests? Later, when speaking of the heavenly council, Eliphaz asks Job 'Have you stood in this council? You know that God does not even trust his holy ones'(Job 15.15).[104]

The problem is well illustrated by Ecclestiastes 5.6: 'Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger/angel that it was a mistake ...' Did one confess before the face/presence of the angel (translating literally), or of the messenger, or of the priest? The MT has simply *lpny hml'k*, which the LXX rendered as *pro prosopou tou theou*, the face of God, implying that *hml'k* had been read as 'the *'elohim'*, itself an ambiguous word. The English translations of offer 'angel' (AV), or 'messenger' (RSV), 'the angel of God' (NEB, adding the word God) or 'God's priest' (GNB, also adding the word God). The original simply has *the* angel.

The high priests alone were permitted to see the furnishings of the holy place, and so the secret knowledge was in some way connected with them. When the tabernacle was transported through the desert; the high priest had to wrap the furnishings in two or even three covers before the sons of Kohath could carry them (Num. 4). Aaron and his sons had to guard everything concerning the altar and within the veil (Num. 18.7, also LXX Num. 3.10). For anyone else, these things brought death, and yet Jesus was described in early Christian texts as the high priest who had revealed these secrets. 'To Jesus alone as our high priest were the secret things of God committed' (Ignatius, *Phil.* 9); 'The true tradition came from the LORD by drawing aside the curtain (Clement, *Misc.* 7.17); 'Jesus beheld these weighty secrets and made them known to a few (Origen *Celsus* 3.37). This knowledge of Day One, the beginning of the creation, appears in the Qumran texts as the *raz nihyeh*, the mystery of Existence (4Q416, 417). The mystery is knowledge of the God of the Awesome Ones, knowledge of past, present and future, of truth and iniquity, of wisdom and foolishness.[105] The *Hymns* thank God for marvellous mysteries and knowledge (e.g. 1QH XV formerly VII).

It would be interesting at this point to look briefly at the Samaritan priesthood, which did not cease to function in 70 CE, but survived for many centuries. Here, too, the high priest was distinguished from other priests. The *Memar Marqah* III attributes ten prerogatives to the high priest: he is pure, free of defilement, anointed, vested, gives the Great Blessing, begins and ends in worship, gives judgement and dwells in the holy place. There is no mention of sacrifice, which was not a priestly prerogative (cf. Passover). The high priest was 'a man in whom is the

Spirit of God ... the spirit of holiness drops like rain into his heart, so that he has knowledge of the highest things'.[106] The Samaritan high priest was believed to have an inherited knowledge of the divine mysteries, which included knowledge of the Name and its powers, and the ability to calculate the correct calendar. This information was engraved on the high priest's staff, which Adam had brought with him when he left Paradise.[107] In the Hebrew Scriptures, Aaron's rod was the sign of true priesthood and was kept in the holy of holies (Num. 17.10). It could also turn into a snake (Exod. 7.10). It is interesting that Aaron's 'snake' rod was one of the items hidden away in the time of Josiah, along with other furnishing of the holy of holies, and that a 'snake' rod became the staff of a Christian bishop.[108]

The Vestments

The second great symbol of priesthood was the vestments, and the first instruction given in Exodus for the making of priests was that they should be given vestments 'holy garments for glory and for beauty' (Exod. 28.2, cf. Hebrew *Ben Sira* 50.11). The garments then described in Exodus are the multicoloured vestments worn in the outer part of the temple, not the linen garments worn in the holy of holies. The high priest had eight garments for service in the outer part of the tabernacle/temple, the other priests had four. Since the high priest had to wear different garments when he was in the holy of holies from when he was in the outer part of the temple, this must be a clue as to what the vestments signified. When he entered the holy of holies he wore the white linen of the angels, and Philo knew that the high priest was not a man when he was serving there. He hints at this also when he says 'fine linen is not, like wool, the product of creatures subject to death' (*Special Laws* 1.84). Josephus, however, believed the linen of the temple veil to symbolise the earth, as it came from a plant which grew in the earth (*War* 5. 212–13). This suggests that the symbolism of both veil and vestments was older than the explanations which these later writers could offer. It appears in an early Christian wisdom text found at Nag Hammadi, the *Teaching of Silvanus*:

> Clothe yourself with wisdom like a robe, put knowledge upon you like a crown and be seated upon a throne of perception ... From now on, then, my son, return to your divine nature ... Return, my son, to your first Father God and Wisdom your Mother from whom you came into being from the very first ... (CG VII.4.89–91)

When the high priest functioned in the outer part of the temple, which in the temple-as-creation pattern represented the visible, material world, he wore complex coloured garments over his linen robe. The oldest description of these, in Exodus 28.6, prescribes 'the *ephod* of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and of fine twined linen, skilful work [*ḥošeb*]'. This is exactly the same type of fabric as the veil of the

holy of holies, *ḥošeb*, and it, too, was of the four colours and worked with cherubim. It is usually assumed that the coloured threads were wool, but it is not until Josephus' account of the tabernacle that this is expressly stated: the Israelites brought coloured fleeces along with their other offerings to construct the tabernacle (*Ant.* 3.102). Important for our theme is that this was a fabric of mixed threads – linen and gold, and possibly wool also – but also that the high priest and the holy of holies were similarly clothed. Now the purpose of the veil was to mark the border between the visible and the invisible creation – hence the mixed fibres and the gold, which represented divinity interwoven with the material world, but also to conceal the place of the presence of the LORD – and so this presence/face must have been the high priest himself. Later tradition remembered that the garments of the high priest had been the garments of God (*Exod. R.* XXXVIII.8).[109] They had been cut from the very fabric of the divine mystery: 'It is because they are emanations of the supernal mysteries, and are made after the supernal pattern that they are called "residual garments" [*bigde haś'rad*], inasmuch as they have been made of what has been left over of the supernal robes, of the residue of the ethereal celestial splendours' (Zohar Exodus 229b).

Both Josephus and Philo knew that the colours of the veil represented the elements from which the material world was woven: the red was fire, the blue was air, the white was earth and the purple was the sea (Josephus, *War* 5. 212–13, Philo, *Questions on Exodus* 2 85). They also knew that the high priest's outer garment had a similar significance to the veil; it showed that God had made the universe of four (elements), and Josephus speculated that the interwoven gold symbolized the 'splendour by which all things are enlightened' (*Ant.* 3.184). Philo described the outer garment as 'a copy of the universe' and it was made thus so that the high priest wore 'an image of the All' (*Special Laws* 1.96). *He thus represented the divine within the creation, just as did the holy of holies itself.* Philo also speaks of the high priest giving thanks on behalf of the whole human race and the whole creation (*Special Laws* 1.97), but this does not mean that he was simply a representative of the human race. In the *Wisdom of Solomon* we read: 'Upon his long robe the whole world was depicted' (*Wisd.* 18.24), and this should be read in the light of Philo and Josephus, that the vestment 'was' matter. In other words, the high priest's being vested in the visible creation was a symbol of his incarnation, the Angel robed in matter. This was still known to St Symeon of Thessalonike (died 1429): 'The exit of the priest from the sanctuary and his descent to the centre of the nave signifies the descent of Christ from heaven and his humility. That the priest wears sacerdotal vestments signifies the incarnation.'[110] Hence, of course Charles Wesley's well-known words from the Christmas carol 'Hark the herald angels sing': 'Veiled in flesh the godhead see, Hail the incarnate deity.'

This was how the first Christians had understood the veil. The writer to the Hebrews, who knew that the high priest was the LORD and Melchizedek, could say, without any explanation, that the veil of the temple was the flesh of Jesus (Heb. 10.20). The *Infancy Gospel of James* 11.1–2,[111] recorded that Mary was chosen to weave the new veil of the temple whilst she was pregnant with her son. She was spinning the wool for it when she heard the angel at the Annunciation, the incident depicted in ikons. Christ as the high priest robed in matter, that is, human flesh, also occurred in early medieval paintings. His flesh as the temple veil could have been deduced from Hebrews 10.20, but depicting Jesus as the high priest throughout his ministry shows that the high priestly vestments must have been known to have had the same significance as the veil. The entire ministry had been Jesus' high priestly service.

Angels garbed in the vestments of the subministers of a Solemn High Mass are by far the most ubiquitous eucharistic symbol in early Netherlandish painting. Their presence suggests that, in whatever scene from the life of Christ they occur, Christ is the celebrant of the Eternal Mass wearing *the chasuble of his flesh*, assisted by angels garbed in some variation of the vestments of subministers of a Solemn High Mass.[112]

The one believed to be incarnate in the vestment of matter can be deduced from an ornament unique to the high priest. He wore on his forehead a golden plate, on which were inscribed four letters. Exodus 28.36, which prescribes this golden ornament, is usually translated: 'Make a plate of pure gold, and engrave it like the engravings of a signet, "Holy to the LORD" ' but it seems that at the end of the second temple period it was understood as: 'Engrave it like the engraving of a holy seal belonging to the LORD.'[113] Philo says that the four letters were 'the Name which only those whose ears and tongues are purified may hear or speak in the holy place, and no other person nor in any other place at all' (*Moses* 2.114). Aristeas knew that on the high priest's diadem there was the Name of God inscribed in sacred letters on a plate of gold (*Aristeas* 98). Josephus, who was himself of a high priestly family, had the high priest Ananus say 'I who am clothed with the vestments of the high priesthood and am called by that most venerable name ...' (*War* 4.164), and this too could be a reference to the Sacred Name.

The high priest wore the four letters of the Name, and so he could have been greeted 'Blessed is he who comes with the Name of the LORD', 'with' and 'in' being the identical in Hebrew. He would have been the Angel of the Presence (Isa. 63.9), which the LXX translated 'not an angel or an envoy but He Himself'.[114] Thus Isaac, blessing his grandson Levi, prayed 'May [the LORD] draw you and your seed near to him to serve in his sanctuary as the angels of the Presence and the holy ones' (*Jub.* 31.14). When he was anointed, the high priest was marked with the sign of the Name, described by the rabbis as a *chi*

(*b. Horayoth* 12a), but in the time of Ezekiel described as a *tau* (Ezek. 9.4), in each case a diagonal cross.

This cross was to become the mark of Christian baptism, as can be seen from the references in the Book of Revelation, where the redeemed have the Name on their foreheads (Rev. 14.1), described elsewhere as the seal of the living God, which must be a reference to the 'seal' of the Name worn by the high priest (Rev. 7.3). All those thus marked become the priests, serving in the sanctuary with his Name on their foreheads, and seeing the Face (Rev. 22.4). The power of the Name received in baptism protected all who wore it; thus the mighty angel put the mark of the seal on the foreheads of those who would be protected from the wrath to come (Rev. 7.2–3). The seal of baptism was believed literally to protect from the danger of war; 'Every one ... who is baptised in his name, shall be kept unhurt from the destruction of war which impends over the unbelieving nation and the place itself ...' (*Clem. Rec.* 1.39). Irenaeus attributes to the Valentinians the belief that they wore the hidden Name 'which Jesus had put on in the spheres of light' (*Against Heresies* 1.21.3). This must have been a memory of the ancient vesting, when the Name had literally been given to the high priest. Hence the lines in Philippians 2.9: 'God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the Name that is above every name', and the original meaning of 'Blessed is he who comes with the Name of the LORD.'

Since the high priest bore the Name, this must have been the LORD's majesty on Aaron's diadem before which the plague was stopped (*Wisd.* 18.24). The 'Name' was the only piece of high priestly regalia whose purpose was explained in Exodus. It enabled the wearer to bear/forgive guilt (*naśa'*). Hence the commandment to the high priest: 'You shall not bear the Name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who wears his name in vain.' The Name was his protection, and so Aaron could withstand and in effect absorb the plague which was the punishment for the people's sin. This is the context for the two instances of the hiph'il of the verb *paga'* in Isaiah 53; in v.6 'the LORD *laid on* him the iniquity of us all'; and in v.12 'he *intervened* for the transgressors/their sin.' In each case there is the idea of someone coming in between the sinner and the consequence of the sin.[115] Jesus was depicted as the great high priest throughout his ministry, taking away sins and making the broken whole. He was living the great Day of Atonement, bringing the excluded back within the bond of the covenant. This duty extended to all the baptized; those who bore the name and had been renewed, had themselves to make others new. This is the basis of Paul's argument: 'If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation' (2 Cor. 5.18–19).

The bearing or forgiving of sin seems to have been ritualized by the consuming of certain sin offerings. The priest who accepted the sin offering had to eat it in the holy place and it was classed as most holy, something that imparted holiness (Lev. 6.24–30). The eating of the offering is explained later: it was given to the priests to eat so that they could 'bear the iniquity' of the people and thus make atonement for their sins (Lev. 10.17). Another eating ritual was the consumption of the shewbread; this was most holy, and was originally only for the high priests, to be consumed every Sabbath day (Lev. 24.5–9). Information about the shewbread in the Hebrew Scriptures is sparse, and key words are ambiguous, presence, *panim*, and memorial offering, *'azkarah*, being but two of the problems. This was the only cereal offering taken in to the tabernacle/temple, and its nature changed whilst it was there. According to the description in the Mishnah, the bread was placed on a marble table as it was taken in to the temple, but on a table of gold when it was brought out. In other words, it had become holy whilst it was in the temple (*m. Menaḥoth* 11.7). Given that the 'memorial' offering which accompanied the bread could also mean 'invocation',[116] one wonders whether the LORD was invoked, and the bread became the bread of His Presence, rather than the bread set out in His presence. This most holy food was then eaten by the high priests (or later, by all the priests).

The Song

The temple servants sang, although it would not be possible to deduce this from the accounts in the Pentateuch or in the Deuteronomic histories. This suggests that the music of the temple was an important part of the older cult, along with the veil, the chariot throne and the Day of Atonement, aspects which the Deuteronomic historian also passed over in silence. The Chronicler's account of how David installed the ark in Jerusalem emphasizes the place of music in the cult. It was to be a continual ministry (1 Chron. 16.37), resembling the continuous liturgy of the whole creation recorded in the *Testament of Adam*. A broken Qumran text seems to list the prescribed times for this continuous praise and blessing (4Q503), and the *Community Rule* of the sons of light culminates in their rules for singing praises at the correct hours of the correct days (1QS X). The Hekhalot Rabbati reveals that the heavenly songs of praise were prompted by the praises of the people on earth, implying that the song which kept the creation in harmony was in response to the praises sung on earth. 'And all the ministering angels ... when they hear the sound of the hymns and praises which Israel speaks from below, begin from above with Holy Holy Holy.' (#179)[117] This is consistent with another temple tradition remembered well into the Christian era: that the songs of the temple had been part of

the process of atonement, that is, of renewal and recreation. Discussing the role of the Levites, the temple musicians who made atonement (Num. 8.19), there was a saying attributed to R. Benaiah: 'To make atonement for the people of Israel – this refers to the song' (*j. Ta'anit* 4.2).

According to the Chronicler, the Levites were appointed to sing and play instruments, and a smaller group were appointed as ministers before the ark, to invoke, thank and praise the LORD with music (1 Chron. 15.16–16.38).[118] This 'invocation' resembles the songs of the angels in the Merkavah texts. As they played their music at the dedication of the temple, musicians and singers performing 'with one voice' or 'with the voice of unity', the Glory came to fill the house (2 Chron. 5.11–14, another detail missing in the Deuteronomists' account in 1 Kgs 8.10). The list of golden sanctuary items in Solomon's temple includes 'musical instruments' (1 Kgs 7.50: *mezammerot*, often rendered 'cutters').[119] They were for use 'in the house of the LORD', which is why they were made of gold. We have, then, to imagine music-making within the temple itself (as implied in 2 Chron. 29.25), to praise the LORD and to invoke the divine presence.

We could guess that the high priests also sang, and it is possible that the high priest used music to enter the mystical state.[120] David was described as the man who was raised on high and anointed, the sweet singer through whom the Spirit of the LORD spoke (2 Sam. 23.1–2). Prophetic experience was assisted by music: Saul (1 Sam. 10.5–6) and Elisha (2 Kgs 3.15) are well-known examples, but there is also Jahaziel the Levite who fell in the Spirit in the midst of a temple assembly and began to prophesy (2 Chron. 20.13–17). The Levites were appointed to 'prophesy' with their music (1 Chron. 25.1), and the words rendered 'chiefs of the service' in this verse could also be 'princes of the host' (*śry hṣb'*), another indication of the angel status of the temple servants. On this occasion they stood in the temple court, but another account suggests that they played within the temple itself (2 Chron. 29.25). We have, then, to imagine the lesser temple servants making music within the temple itself, to praise the LORD and to invoke the divine presence, such that a prophet spoke from the LORD.

The duties of the Levites could well have described early Christian worship: invocation/remembrance, thanksgiving, i.e. Eucharist, and praise. Since breaking bread was the Sabbath ritual for the priests in the second temple, and the Christians described themselves as saints, literally holy ones,[121] and identified themselves as the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2.9), it is more likely that their worship was modelled on that of the angel priests in the temple, than derived from the synagogue. They worshipped in song (1 Cor. 14.26; Eph. 5.19) and the song expressed the unity and harmony of the community (Col. 3.16). None of the elements of early Christian worship was out of character with temple

worship: prophesying was a priestly activity, as was the interpretation of Scripture and the receiving of revelations. They also sang psalms, understanding the LORD as Jesus, another continuation of the temple cult.

The hymns in the Book of Revelation are a catena of psalm phrases and allusions, presumably based on the patterns of Christian worship that John knew, and the developing expressions of Christology in the New Testament were set in the framework of the psalms. Margaret Day-Denton, in her study of singing hymns to Christ, said:

> Once it is established in Christian belief, that Jesus has been given the divine title, the whole Psalter becomes liable to a Christian *relecture* in which the exalted Jesus is the LORD addressed and praised in the psalms ... This is not to suggest that the psalms were read exclusively in this way, but rather to say that the NT writers frequently seem to have left that hermeneutical possibility open. At the very least, as Charles Biggs wrote almost a century ago, 'The writers of the New Testament take no trouble to guard their readers against misapprehension on a subject of such consequence.' ... [There is] NT evidence for prayer forms in use in early Christianity which were highly and even consciously, derivative of the psalms and in which Jesus becomes the addressee of the psalms ... Literary dependence on the Psalter is a particular feature of NT passages which refer to Jesus as God.[122]

Given the strong warnings against the pagan associations of music, and the hostility to the tradition of instrumental music in the temple,[123] there must have been a very good reason for keeping music in Christian worship. If the Christians were the new royal priesthood, their worship would have been joined to the song of the angels. The same themes recur in the context of Christian worship: the unity of the angels and their song as the harmony of the creation.[124] Gregory of Nyssa's remarkable use of Tabernacles imagery is proof that there was a detailed knowledge in the early Church of the angelic liturgy of the temple. Sin had silenced the praise of the creation, he explained, and the symphony of celebration was no longer heard because earth no longer joined with heaven. At the great Feast of Tabernacles, when both creation and community were restored, all would form one great choral dance together as they had formerly done.[125]

Song was a sign of the angelic unity in the earthly community. At the end of the first century Clement of Rome exhorted the divided Corinthian Christians to think of the company of angels all singing Holy Holy Holy, 'In the same way, we ought ourselves, gathered together in a conscious unity, to cry to him as it were with a single voice ... (1 *Clem.* 34). A few years later Ignatius of Antioch used the same image to exhort the Christians to unity: Your clergy are tuned to their bishop like the strings of a harp, he wrote to the church at Ephesus, and the result is 'a hymn of praise to Jesus Christ from minds that are in unison and affections that are in harmony. ... Join this choir,

every one of you, let there be a whole symphony of minds ...' (*Eph. 4*). A commentary on the psalms attributed to Eusebius of Caesarea says this: 'And so more sweetly pleasing to God than any musical instrument would be the symphony of the people of God, by which, in every church of God, with kindred spirit and single disposition, with one mind and unanimity of faith and piety, we raise melody in unison [*homophonon melos*] in our psalmody' (*On Psalm 91.4*, PG 23.1173).

The image of music and harmony was found in descriptions of the monastic communities. Athanasius wrote of 'monasteries in the mountains, like tabernacles, filled with saintly choirs reciting psalms, devoutly reading, fasting, praying, rejoicing in the hope of things to come, and labouring to give alms while maintaining love and harmony among themselves.' (*Life of St Anthony* 44 PG 26.908). John Chrysostom described the life of the monks thus: '[At daybreak] all stand forming a sacred choir ... they stand and sing the prophetic hymns with great harmony and well-ordered melody' (*On 1 Timothy*, Hom. 14, PG 62.576).

Singing united the liturgies of heaven and earth. There is 'One song for earth and heaven' in the ancient liturgies of St James and St Mark. The *Apostolic Constitutions* interpret 'On earth as it is in heaven' as a description of praise: 'As the heavenly natures of the incorporeal powers do all glorify God with one consent, so also on earth all men with one mouth and one purpose may glorify the only, the one and true God by Christ his only begotten' (*Ap. Con.* 2.56). Basil of Caesarea, writing to Gregory of Nazianzus about his experience of the monasteries of Pontus, asked: 'What is more blessed than to imitate the chorus of angels here on earth?' (*Letter 2*, PG 32. 225). Cyril of Jerusalem taught of the Sanctus: 'We call to mind the seraphim ... saying "Holy Holy Holy is the LORD of Hosts". Therefore we recite this doxology transmitted to us by the seraphim in order to become participants in the hymnody of the superterrestrial hosts' (*Catecheses* 23.6). And John Chrysostom:

> Above, the hosts of angels sing praise. Below, men form choirs in the church and imitate then by singing the same doxology. Above, the seraphim cry out in the Thrice Holy hymn; below, the human throng sends up the same cry. The inhabitants of heaven and earth are brought together in a common assembly; there is one thanksgiving, one shout of delight, one joyful chorus. (*Homily on Isaiah* 6.1, PG 56.97)

Song was the sign of apotheosis. Thus Maximus the Confessor taught: 'In this light, the soul now equal in dignity with the holy angels ... and having learned to praise in concert with them ... is brought to the adoption of similar likeness by grace' and 'The unceasing and sanctifying doxology by the holy angels in the Trisagion signifies, in general, the equality of the way of life and conduct and the harmony in the divine praising which will take place in the age to come by both heavenly and earthly powers' (*The Church's Mystagogy* 23, 24).

Qumran

The Qumran texts confirm beyond any reasonable doubt that priests were regarded as angels, and that their roles, and especially that of the high priest, were as the biblical texts imply.[126] The priests were to be 'his righteous people, his host, servants, the angels of his glory' (4Q511.35). The high priest was a teacher and revealer of heavenly secrets. That enigmatic figure known as 'the Teacher' was 'the priest, to whom God had given understanding to interpret the words of the prophets and to reveal the mysteries' (1QpHab II, VII). The Master has been given knowledge by Wisdom (1QH XX, formerly XII).

These angel priests joined with the angels of heaven in one liturgy. Someone was described as the Angel of the Presence, which probably did not mean the one who stood in the Presence, but the one who was the Presence.[127] One of the hymns found in Cave 1 describes those who share with the Angels of the Presence (1QH XIV, formerly VI). Another speaks of being part of the Holy Ones (1QH XIX, formerly XI). Someone stood in the everlasting abode, 'illumined with perfect light for ever' (1QH XX, formerly XVIII) or stood with the Host of the Holy Ones, in the congregation of the sons of heaven, amidst the spirits of knowledge (1QH XIII, formerly III). This is like the twenty-four elders in the Book of Revelation, joining in worship around the throne along with the angel host and the living creatures. Like these elders, they sang the song of renewal, 'standing with the everlasting host to be renewed together with all the living and to praise together with them that know' (1QH XIX, formerly XI). Elsewhere we read of someone who stood with the *'elohim*, singing to the King (4Q427). Clearest of all is the Blessing for the sons of Zadok: 'May you be as the Angel of the Presence in the Abode of Holiness, ... may you attend upon the service in the temple of the Kingdom, and decree destiny in company with the Angels of the Presence' (1QSbIV). Someone in the Qumran Community was transfigured. 'Thou hast illumined my face by Thy covenant' (1QH XII, formerly IV), and this had made him a teacher of mysteries: 'Through me Thou hast illumined the face of the congregation ... for Thou hast given me knowledge through thy marvellous mysteries' (1QH XII, formerly IV).

Melchizedek, of whom so little is known from canonical texts, and whose most significant appearance in Ps. 110 (LXX, 109) has become an opaque text, was clearly a major messianic figure for those who told the history of Israel through the Enoch traditions, and regarded the second temple as impure and apostate. The Melchizedek text depicts him as the heavenly high priest, *Elohim* coming to bring the Day of Judgement, the great Day of Atonement at the end of the tenth Jubilee. This was temple ritual actualized in history. The Messiah was the anointed high priest, the Angel. According to one reconstruction of this

fragmented text, the teachers of Melchizedek's people had been hidden and kept secret.[128] All of this indicates consistently that the angel priesthood was a memory from the first temple, something destroyed by the work of Josiah. Perhaps it was one of those things in which Israel had gone astray in the age of wrath, which is what the Damascus Document calls the period of the second temple.

Finally, there is the Liturgy in a collection of texts known as the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. The problem is: what are they describing? Is it the angels in heaven or, as has been argued recently,[129] is it temple worship, the glorious participants being the vested priests? The fragments describe the priests and servants in the holy of holies, drawing near to knowledge, making atonement, and giving teachings about holy things (4Q400.1). The colours in this drama are those of the tabernacle: *roqem* work (4Q403.1; 405.14–15) as used for the tabernacle curtains. The chiefs of those vested for service, however, wear *ḥošeb* work, the characteristic needlework of the high priest's robe (4Q405.10–11). There are flames of fire, and the veil of the holy of holies (4Q405.15–17). The scene is like that of Ezekiel's vision, with the wheels and the firmament above them, and the sound of wings (4Q405.20–22). The whole effect is one of white light, but there is fine gold too, another characteristic of the high priest's vestment. The sacrifices of the holy ones are cereal offerings and drink offerings (11Q17.21–22). The participants in this liturgy are the holy ones of the *'elohim*, and they sing praises.

Priests as angels? There is no doubt that they were. St John's vision of the heavenly liturgy was not an original inspiration. He, and the first Christians, knew the context of those images in the Letter to the Hebrews: Christ as the great high priest, Melchizedek raised up to the priesthood, the veil of the temple which is his flesh. I conclude with a few lines which could easily have come from Qumran, but this is not the angel priests of the *Sabbath Songs*. This is Narsai describing the consecration of the Eucharist:

> The priests are still and the deacons stand in silence. The whole people is quiet and still ... The mysteries are set in order, the censers are smoking, the lamps are shining and the deacons are hovering and brandishing their fans in the likeness of the Watchers ... Deep silence and peaceful calm settles on that place ... it is filled and overflows with brightness and splendour, beauty and power. (Narsai, *Homily* XVII A)

7

THE HOLY OF HOLIES

The Holy of Holies in the second temple was empty; there was no ark (*m. Yoma* 5.2). When Josephus described Pompey's entry into the temple and into the holy of holies, which none but the high priest was permitted to enter, he said that Pompey saw the menorah and the lamps, the table, and the libation vessels and censers of solid gold. There is no mention of anything that could have been in the holy of holies (*War* 1.152).[1] The high priest entered the holy of holies once a year on the Day of Atonement, and, by implication, the only ritual performed there was the blood rite of the great atonement. Visionary texts, however, those of the second temple period and later, as well as the precious fragments that remain from the first temple period, all describe a furnished holy of holies and imply that there were other rituals there. The vision of Isaiah, 'in the year that King Uzziah died' (Isa. 6.1, i.e. 742 BCE) was set in a furnished and populated holy of holies. He saw the throne, the LORD and the seraphim. The traditions about the holy of holies which appear in the visionary texts must have their roots in the first temple.

The most vivid of Ezekiel's visions described the Glory leaving the temple and then returning (Ezek. 10 and 43). Second temple texts show clearly that some people believed that the glory had yet to return. The empty holy of holies in the second temple must have been a potent symbol of what had departed. In the time of the Messiah, they said, the ark would return, together with the fire, the menorah, the Spirit and the cherubim (*Num. R.* XV. 10).[2]

Everything in the holy of holies was the exclusive preserve of the priests.[3] The teachings based on the form and content of the holy of holies were also exclusive to the priests. Since it is possible to reconstruct from fragments of later tradition that the form of the temple and the holy of holies represented the visible and invisible creation, whatever can be recovered about the holy of holies will also have been the world view of the (first) temple priesthood (and vice versa), with all that that implies for understanding the roots of Christian theology and Liturgy. It can be shown, for example, that the temple concept of time was neither linear nor cyclic, but based on the concept of a hidden eternity in the midst of time as we perceive it. This hidden centre was also the unity from which all creation came forth.

The holy of holies is a theme and a symbol common to the esoteric traditions of all the Abrahamic faiths. Discussing these traditions in Islam, Corbin wrote:

> Shiite gnosis ... meditates in this sense on the cubic form of the temple of the Ka'abah, which corresponds to the form of the city-temple in Ezekiel and John ... The very structure of the Temple thus betokens the structure of the pleroma of the eternal prophetic Reality, and the temple of the Ka'abah is transfigured into a spiritual Temple. In this way there emerges an *Imago Templi* that is common to all three branches of the Abrahamic tradition.[4]

The features which Corbin explores elsewhere, such as the Light which contains all light, the Throne, the expression 'the Throne rests on the water', the idea of the Temple of the Ka'abah as the centre of the world 'containing, homologically, all of creation'[5] – all have parallels in the traditions of the first temple. The pilgrims who walk around the Ka'abah are like the angels who encircle the heavenly throne, 'La Maison d'Allâh apparaît alors comme un voile occultant la réalité principielle ... Le "secret" de la Kaaba réside dans le fait qu'elle est, selon la signification plus haute, une représentation de l'Essence, et qu'elle constitue par elle-même une Epiphanie Essentielle',[6] these too are familiar. The question is: how is the similarity to be explained?

The opening words of the Hebrew Scriptures are also a description of the holy of holies. 'The beginning' was the state which the holy of holies represented, not the point at which time began. 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth' describes the state whence the creation emerged. In five days which followed, God created everything we see: heaven and earth, the waters and the dry land, trees and plants, sun, moon and stars, fishes, birds and land creatures, and finally God created human beings. Later tradition remembered that the secrets of the holy of holies were the secrets of the creation, what Qumran texts were to describe as the *raz nihyeh*, the mystery of being. This was high priestly tradition since only the high priest entered the holy of holies.

The Older Creation Story

Those who divide the Pentateuch into four sources designate this first chapter of Genesis as P, meaning written by the priests, and in this case, written by priests during or after the exile. Far from being a primitive tale, we have been told, this was the world view of priests who had experienced exile in Babylon and known another culture at first hand. What we cannot know is how far that experience had affected their way of thinking. According to von Rad, Genesis 1 'contains the essence of priestly knowledge in a most concentrated form ... doctrine carefully enriched over the centuries ... nothing is here by chance ... everything must be considered carefully'.[7] This may well be true, but the carefully chosen elements in this account of the creation, if they reflect the experience of exile, are more likely to have been an *innovation* in the priestly tradition. There had been great upheavals in the priesthood as a

result of Josiah's purge, and ample evidence survives that the priests displaced at that time did not recognize and accept the new regime in Jerusalem. It was Josiah, not Nebuchadnezzar, who finally destroyed the old temple, and there were long memories about the work of Josiah. Essential items from the temple were 'hidden' in his time – the anointing oil, the ark, the manna and Aaron's rod (*b. Horayoth* 12a), and in the time of the Messiah the lamp, the ark, the Spirit, the fire and the cherubim would be restored to the temple (*Num. R.* XV.10), the implication being that these were absent from the second temple but had been in the first. It was also remembered that eighty thousand priests fled to the army of Nebuchadnezzar, and then settled among the Ishmaelites (*j. Ta'anit* 4.5, the Jerusalem Talmud, often known as Yerushalmi). Not everyone was grieving when Josiah's 'reformed' temple fell.[8] The Jerusalem Talmud continues with lines from Isaiah 21.13–14, and interprets them as a reference to the departed priests. 'The oracle concerning Arabia: In the thickets of Arabia you will lodge . . .' was said to mean 'A great burden is on Arabia' (Hebrew *maśa'* can mean oracle or burden), 'for those who had been in the Forest of Lebanon [the temple, 1 Kgs 7.2] are now in the thickets of Arabia'. From this we may conclude two things: the priests with the older ways and therefore with knowledge of the traditions of the holy of holies, were known to have gone to Arabia,[9] so we should expect to find remnants of the first temple among the sons of Ishmael; and second, *that this was still remembered when the Jerusalem Talmud was compiled in Palestine about 400 CE.*

The biblical accounts of the first temple period describe two forms of religion: one had shrines and holy places throughout the land, high places where incense was burned, pillars, idols, 'abominable things', Asherahs, people called 'cult prostitutes', vessels for the host of heaven, rooftop altars, secret things, mediums, wizards and teraphim, a bronze serpent, horses dedicated to the sun and child sacrifice. The other had only one place of worship, emphasized the salvation history of the chosen people and their release from Egypt, abhorred and destroyed all the objects and tradition of the other religion, put great emphasis on the celebration of the Passover and depicted most of the kings in Jerusalem as wicked apostates. The devotees of this religion wrote the Deuteronomic history, which is usually treated as the major source of information for the first temple period. There are, however, questions. Is it likely that almost all the kings of Jerusalem were misguided apostates who permitted and even encouraged alien cults in their kingdom? And what would have been considered alien? Our major source judges all the kings by the standards set out in Deuteronomy whose very name means 'the second Law'.

There had been earlier kings who attempted to change the religion of Jerusalem, notably Hezekiah, whose 'reforms' were considered by some

to have been sacrilege. His predecessor Ahaz had followed the 'other' religion; he had made images, burned incense at the high places, and under trees, and had even sacrificed his sons[10] (2 Chron. 28.3–4; 2 Kgs 16.3 says only one son). Isaiah, who prophesied at that time, did not condemn him for any of this, and yet there are grounds for believing that he did condemn the 'reforming' Hezekiah for sacrilege.[11] In other words, the religion of Ahaz was not considered by Isaiah to be an alien cult. The Deuteronomic historian's favourable account of Josiah's changes should be read with this in mind. When the king ordered the destruction and removal of anything that the Deuteronomists would not tolerate, not everyone considered this a reform. Josiah altered the religion of the city and the religion of the rural areas, so this was not a case of one of these traditions taking over the other. This was a wholesale change, but nobody knows where these 'reformers' originated.

Josiah removed from the temple all the vessels for Baal, for Asherah and for the host of heaven (2 Kgs 23.4), because Deuteronomy forbade dealing with the host of heaven (Deut. 4.19) despite the LORD's ancient role as the LORD of Hosts (Isa. 6.3), a title which survived in liturgy, but not in the Deuteronomists' materials. Josiah deposed the 'idolatrous' priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense at the high places, those who burned incense to Baal and to the host of heaven (2 Kgs 23.5). He also brought the Asherah out of the temple and burned it by the Kidron (2 Kgs 23.6), thus removing the female aspect of the LORD. The Enochic history remembered this as the forsaking of Wisdom, and Deuteronomy actually stated that the Law was a substitute for Wisdom: 'keeping the commandments will be your Wisdom ...' (Deut. 4.6). Josiah broke down the houses of the 'male cult prostitutes' in the temple precincts, where the women wove hangings for Asherah (2 Kgs 23.7). The Hebrew consonants for 'male cult prostitutes' are the same as those for holy ones, angels *qdšm*, and, given what is known about the censorship methods of the ancient scribes, reading the letters in this way could have been deliberate.[12] Josiah's breaking down the houses of the holy ones could have been his suppression of the cult of the heavenly host. These two elements alone indicate that Josiah abolished what is recognizable as the veneration of Wisdom and her seventy sons, the angels.[13]

Almost all that Josiah swept away can be matched to elements in the older religion, not in the cults of Canaan, but in the religion of the patriarchs and the prophets. As the history of Israel is presented in the Bible, the patriarchs before the time of Moses and the kings after him followed the religion that Josiah 'reformed' and Deuteronomy condemned. They set up altars under trees and built shrines all over the land, wherever the LORD had appeared to them (e.g. Gen. 12.6–7; Gen. 18.1; Gen. 26.25; Gen. 28.18; 1 Chron. 16.38–40; 2 Chron. 1.2–13). The

'other' religion was still flourishing at the time of Josiah's reform,[14] and the present sequence in the Pentateuch may indicate that the older religion of the patriarchs was superseded by that of Moses, but not in remote antiquity. El Shaddai, the God of the patriarchs who, after the advent of Moses, was to be known as the LORD (Exod. 6.3), *may reflect the changes in the time of Josiah.*[15]

The priests who remained and taught after the suppression of the older ways would have written an account of the creation with no place for Wisdom or the angels. Genesis 1 is this expurgated account, even though hints in other ancient texts show that both Wisdom and the angels had been part of the creation story, as it was told before the 'reform' of Josiah. A vestige of the angels survives in Genesis 2.1: 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them,' even though there has been no mention of the heavenly host in the preceding account. A vestige of divine parenthood survives in the words: 'These were the generations [literally 'the begettings'] of the heaven and the earth' (Gen. 2.4), even though there is no other suggestion of divine parenthood in the account. There are, however, heavenly beings elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures, called 'sons of God'. That most enigmatic verse 'Let us make humans in our image' results in a male and a female, even though there is no female divinity in the chapter, nor apparently, in the Hebrew Scriptures as they are usually read and understood.

For over a century it has been widely accepted that one of the elements of an earlier story that has disappeared from Genesis 1 is an account of the birth of the gods, such as occurs in other ancient creation stories.[16] Genesis 2.4 *does* conclude 'These are the generations of the heavens and the earth ...', implying a birth process, and Genesis 2.1 describes the heavens and the earth and *all their host.* If there had been such an account, and the angels had been born on Day One, i.e. in the holy of holies, this would provide a context for understanding the accounts of the 'birth' of the king or the Messiah as Son of God in a temple ritual such as that implied by Psalm 110 or Isaiah 9.6: 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder ...'.

We assume that the writers of Genesis 1 were men like Ezekiel, priests who had been deported from Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city in 597 BCE. He was among the exiles when he received his visions of God (Ezek. 1.3), but little is known of these priests in exile. When Ezra 'the priest, the scribe, learned in matters of the commandments of the LORD and his statutes for Israel' (Ezra 7.11) led his party back to Jerusalem, he could summon 38 men of priestly descent from Casiphia, together with 220 temple servants. Presumably they had a settlement there, even a place of study. Perhaps this is where the priestly traditions were preserved and codified (Ezra 8.15–20).

What is certain is that large numbers of priests are mentioned in the accounts of the earlier return from Babylon, but the texts are disordered and no clear picture emerges. One of them was the high priest Joshua son of Jozadak (Ezra 3.2) but his right to that office was challenged (Zech. 3.1–10). Someone described as Satan accused him, but the LORD declared Joshua to be the chosen priest in Jerusalem, and so he was vested and given authority to officiate on the Day of Atonement (Zech. 3.5, 9), but he was not anointed. The story of the return emphasizes the continuity with the old temple; the precious vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had looted were given back to the exiles and returned to the temple (Ezra 1.5–11). Joshua, leader of the first return, was a high priest. Ezra was a priest. Genealogies were carefully scrutinized, and anyone who could not demonstrate pure priestly descent was barred from office (Ezra 2.62–63). He could not eat the most holy food offered in the temple. Eliashib the high priest and his brethren the priests were active in rebuilding the city walls (Neh. 3.1). This is the official account.

As we have seen, all was not well. Voices in the final chapters of Isaiah complained that the restored temple was a mockery. 'What is this house which you would build for me?' (Isa. 66.1). Those who offered sacrifices there were no better than foreign people with their unclean ways. The one who made the bull offering i.e. the high priest, was no better than a murderer, and those who offered lambs might as well be offering dogs (Isa. 66.3). The temple hierarchy had cast out their brethren, and the LORD himself would be heard in his temple bringing judgement on their enemies and his (Isa.66.6). There were new ideas about purity and who was eligible to be one of the LORD's people. The Law of Deuteronomy was teaching that eunuchs and foreigners were not to be part of the assembly of the LORD (Deut. 23.1–4), and this was enforced (Neh. 13.1). Foreigners and eunuchs were driven out, even though a prophetic voice warned that these people should have a place in the temple (Isa. 56.3–8). Even the high priest's grandson was banished from Jerusalem under the new regime; he had married an unacceptable wife (Neh. 13.28). Others who had married unacceptable spouses were required to divorce them and disown their children (Ezra 10.1–44). The prophet ('the Third Isaiah') spoke for the dispossessed: 'Thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us ... We have become like those over whom thou hast never ruled, like those who are not called by thy name' (Isa. 63.16,19).

The Book of the Twelve Prophets has materials from many periods. The collection known as Malachi is witness to this fraught situation when the exiles returned and established their own form of worship in the new temple. One element of the book is the condemnation of divorce, presumably prompted by the imposition of mass divorce (Ezra

10). The name Malachi means 'my angel', suggesting that the prophet was a priest, since the priests were held to be angels on earth. Malachi condemned the priests of his time because they offered polluted bread on the altar, and thus they polluted the LORD (Mal. 1.7). They gave false teaching and in so doing endangered the covenant, when it was the duty of a priest, as an angel of the LORD of Hosts, to guard knowledge and give Torah. ' "You have caused many to stumble by your Torah, you have corrupted the covenant of Levi," says the LORD of Hosts' (Mal. 2.8). Like the prophetic voice in Isaiah 66, Malachi warned that the LORD would appear in his temple to bring judgement on the sons of Levi, so that the offerings would be pure again, as they had once been (Mal. 3.1–4). The Sun of Righteousness would arise with healing in *her* wings (Mal. 4.2 translating literally).

Non-canonical writings give a similar view. Texts that give any indication of when the rift occurred in the priesthood all point to the same period. The Qumran texts are unanimous in identifying this as the time when Israel went astray. *1 Enoch* (*1 En.* 89.73; 93.9), the Community Rule (1QS V), and the Damascus Document (CD III) all record different aspects of the disaster: an apostate generation with polluted bread on their altar, people under the dominion of Belial whose deeds were a defilement in the age of wrath. *They had gone astray in the secret things, presumably the teachings of the priesthood* (see below). Their holy of holies was empty. The account of the creation in Genesis 1 was written by the priests of this generation, and the crucial question is: were the authors of this account the apostates, whom Enoch condemned ('the sheep who saw not and their shepherds likewise', *1 En.* 89.74; 'all who lived [in the temple] became blind and their hearts godlessly forsook Wisdom' (*1 En.* 93.8), or were they true to the older teaching? *The former is the more likely.*

The Christian Liturgy, however, has a furnished holy of holies, with angel priests and the ark/throne where the atonement sacrifice is offered. The LORD had appeared over the ark between the cherubim or had been enthroned in the holy of holies between the cherubim; these had been equivalent symbols from the tabernacle and temple phases of the tradition. In the Christian Liturgy, the LORD was present with the elements on the altar/throne. However the sanctuary furnishings are described, the important point is that they are *sanctuary* furnishings because the Eucharist is a sanctuary ritual.[17]

The Six Days

It has often been suggested that another story underlies the account in Genesis 1. The six days of divine activity cover not six but eight separate acts: on the third day God caused dry land to appear and then caused the earth to produce vegetation; and on the sixth day, God made the

land-dwelling creatures and then created humans. The writer was perhaps adapting an eight-day scheme to fit into six, so that God could rest from work on the Sabbath. Certain emphases suggest that another story was being superseded: the role of the stars is carefully defined, for example, perhaps to exclude the idea that the stars were independent heavenly beings and the object of worship, and God created the great sea monsters, perhaps excluding the idea that they were his primeval adversaries in the struggle to impose order on chaos. The Mesopotamian parallels have been noted: 'the deep' *t'hom*, (Gen. 1.2) was said to be Tiamat, the subterranean ocean and chaos dragon vanquished by Marduk before the creation, and the wind/spirit (Gen. 1.2) has been compared to the winds which helped Marduk in the struggle. Echoes of Mesopotamian sources in these verses might indicate that the priestly authors had been exiled in Babylon and influenced by that culture. Thus Genesis 1 is less likely to be from old Jerusalem, 'the essence of priestly knowledge in a most concentrated form ... doctrine carefully enriched over the centuries ...' to use again the words of von Rad, and more likely to be an innovation from the exile, the work of the apostate generation. There can be no certainty, only the balancing of possibilities.

A traditional approach to the six days of creation links them to Moses' construction of the tabernacle.[18] Memories are long, and so Ginzberg was able to reconstruct this pattern from a variety of later Jewish sources.

> God told the angels: On the first day of creation, I shall make the heavens and stretch them out; so will Israel raise up the tabernacle as the dwelling place of my Glory. On the second day I shall put a division between the terrestrial waters and the heavenly waters; so will [Moses] hang up a veil in the tabernacle to divide the Holy Place and the Most Holy. On the third day I shall make the earth put forth grass and herbs; so will he, in obedience to my commands, eat herbs on the first night of Passover and prepare shewbread before me. On the fourth day I shall make the luminaries; so he will stretch out a golden candlestick before me. On the fifth day I shall create the birds; so he will fashion the cherubim with outstretched wings. On the sixth day I shall create man; so will Israel set aside a man from the sons of Aaron as high priest for my service.[19]

The *Midrash Tanhuma* 11.2 is one of the sources on which Ginzberg drew, an early midrash which states that 'the tabernacle is equal to the creation of the world itself', and links the days of creation to the erection of the tabernacle. The order is not quite the same as in Ginzberg's account (which was a conflation from several sources) because on the third day, the gathering of the waters is linked to making of the bronze laver. The crucial second day, however, is identical: 'About the second day of creation, it states: "Let there be a firmament, and let it divide the waters from the waters" (Gen. 1.6). About the tabernacle it is written: "And the veil shall divide between you" (Exod. 26.33)'.[20]

That this was an ancient system of correspondence can be seen in the traditional order for the construction of the tabernacle described in Exodus 40. There are considerable problems with these texts, as can be seen from the discrepancies between the Hebrew and the Greek. There is nothing in the Greek, for example, corresponding to the Hebrew of Exodus 40.7, 11, 30–32, i.e. there is no mention in the Greek of the bronze laver. Similarly, the golden incense altar is mentioned in Exodus 40. 26–27, but it does not appear in the prescriptions for the tabernacle in Exodus 25. It does appear, however, in Exodus 30.1–10 as a very obvious appendix to that account. The summary account of Moses' construction of the tabernacle in Exodus 40 is punctuated by 'as the LORD commanded Moses', and the stages of construction thus marked correspond to the order of the creation. For the first four days this is quite clear; for the rest, the older pattern can just be traced. Moses erected the tabernacle (Exod. 40.18–19: Day One). The veil was set up to screen the ark and the *kapporet* the 'mercy seat' (Exod. 40.20–21, Second Day). The table was put in place for the shewbread (Exod. 40.22–23), but incense and drink offerings were also placed there: 'dishes for incense, bowls for libations' (Exod. 25.29). In other words, this was the place for the vegetation offerings of the Third Day. The seven-branched lamp was put in place, representing the lights of heaven (Exod. 40.24–25, the Fourth Day). After this, the pattern is broken by the intrusion of the altar of incense. Then comes the altar of burnt offering, which could have corresponded to the birds and animals, the sacrificial offerings created on the Fifth/Sixth days. In the Hebrew text, the final act was setting up the laver, where the priests purified themselves before approaching the altar (Exod. 40.30–32). This was the creation of the human to serve the LORD as high priest. Time and transmission have worn away the detail, but an ancient system can still be glimpsed.

Implicit in this correspondence between the creation and the tabernacle/temple must be the belief that there was some state outside and beyond both, something above the created heavens and below the created earth, a state of time outside 'eternity'. The Book of Revelation knew of another state beyond 'heaven and earth' which remained after heaven and earth had passed away (Rev. 20.11). This was described simply as 'a great white throne and him who sat upon it', and was, perhaps, the heaven of heavens or the highest heaven, from which the LORD used to descend to appear in the holy of holies. Such a system appears in medieval Christian writings, where there is a lower heaven for the Christ, the saints and the angels, a place of fire (the 'empyrean'), and then a further heaven of heavens for God alone.[21] Implicit in this must have been the belief that heaven was the link between the visible creation and the heaven of heavens. Now 'heaven of heavens' does occur in the Hebrew Scriptures; Deuteronomy describes the LORD's

domain as the heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is in it (Deut. 10.14). The psalmist calls on the whole creation to praise the LORD, and summons the highest heavens along with the angels and the heavenly host, before addressing the earth, the mountains, the trees, the cattle, creeping things and birds, the rulers of the earth and ordinary people (Ps. 148). Words attributed to Solomon show that the heaven and the highest heaven were distinguished: Who is able to build him a house, since heaven even highest heaven is not able to contain him?' (2 Chron. 2.6; also Solomon's prayer in 1 Kgs 8.27 and 2 Chron. 6.18).

When Ezra prayed he described the creation as he knew it: 'Thou art the LORD, thou alone; thou hast made the heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and thou preservest all of them and the host of heaven worships thee' (Neh. 9.6). The heaven that was created in the beginning, together with the earth, must have been Day One, the holy of holies, the intermediate state between the visible, material creation and the ultimate presence of God in the heaven of heavens

Day One

Genesis 1 says very little about Day One, a significant silence about the very heart of the temple tradition, but *appropriate for an empty holy of holies*. God created in the beginning, and a Spirit of God was fluttering over the face of the deep waters. *Ruaḥ,* Spirit, is a feminine noun, *'elohim*, God, is plural, and the verb *bara'* usually translated 'create' is only used to describe divine activity and so implies something unique. The first questions about Day One, even from this brief account, are: What was Day One? It was the holy of holies, but also envisaged as the state of unity outside time and matter. How many were involved 'in the beginning'? Clearly more than one divine being. And what was done? The verb *bara',* says the Hebrew Dictionary,[22] is always used of divine activity and seldom found outside the Priestly strand of the Pentateuch and the Second Isaiah. There are some occurrences in the Psalms and Ezekiel, and hardly any elsewhere. Both the Psalms and Ezekiel could also be called 'priestly' writings, since Ezekiel was a priest and the Psalms were used in the temple. This divine activity did not extend to the making of trees or animals; it was for heaven and earth (Gen. 1.1), the host of heaven (Isa. 40.26), the ends of the earth (Isa. 40.28), the north and the south (Ps. 89.12), the winds (Amos 4.13), and human beings (Gen. 1.27). It also created such things as righteousness (Isa. 45.8), evil and darkness (Isa. 45.7), new and hidden things (Isa. 48.6), the new heaven and the new earth (Isa. 65.17). There were thus two degrees or types of creative activity, and the visible material creation, apart from humans, was not the result of *br',* the uniquely divine process.

On Day One, God said 'Let there be light' and there was light, and God separated the light from the darkness. R. Tanḥum taught that this was the Day when unique things were created: heaven, earth and light, since there can be only one heaven and one earth and one light. R. Judan taught that this was the Day in which the Holy One was One with his universe (*Gen. R.* III.8). Other texts say more about Day One; what cannot be known is whether they were recording ancient memories or suggesting a novel interpretation. The balance of evidence suggests the former, as there is consistency over a wide spectrum of sources. The underlying idea in many later understandings was that Day One was itself the first to be brought forth by the Creator, and that Day One held within itself/herself/himself all life. This was not a 'time' but a state, and, like the holy of holies itself, hidden within the visible creation we experience day by day. Philo emphasized that 'in the beginning' should not be taken 'in a chronological sense, for time there was not before there was a world. Time began either simultaneously with the world or after it' (*On the Creation* 26). 'The universe that consisted of ideas would have no other location than the Divine Logos, which was the Author of this ordered frame' (*Creation* 20). The Logos (and Philo equates this with Wisdom) was that within which the origins of life were held.

John in his prologue wrote of the Logos who was with God 'in the beginning' but there is ambiguity about the role of the Logos, just as there is ambiguity about the holy of holies. 'Without him was not anything made that was made. In him was light and the light was the life of men' or 'Without him was not anything made. That which has been made was life in him, and the life was the light of men' (John 1.3). John did not write that the Logos was *in the light*, but that light and life were *in the Logos*, which invites us to imagine that the Logos was the 'container' of light and life. On the other hand, all things were made through the Logos, which could imply that the Logos was the agent. The hymn in Colossians 1.15–20 favours the former view. 'He is the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible . . . He is before all things and *in him all things hold together*' (Col. 1.15–17).[23]

There are interesting ambiguities in the Old Syriac version of John's Gospel (the Curetonian), which, in the light of later developments could be evidence that an older Semitic understanding of the Prologue was being altered: 'In the Beginning there was the Word (v.1) . . . All things were [made] in him . . . (v.3). . . . In him was life (v.4) . . . He was in the world and the world was in him (v.10).' The later Peshitta version is the same, the familiar English: 'All things were made through him . . . In him was life . . . he was in the world and the world was made through him . . .' When Ephrem wrote his commentary on the fourfold Gospel (the Diatessaron) he must have had the earlier version before

him because he explained that it meant (or perhaps had to mean) the same as the (now) familiar one: 'All things were made in him – meaning that through him were created the works . . .'.[24]

There were several in the early Church who did envisage the Logos of the prologue as the 'container' of all life, 'in the beginning', i.e. the holy of holies, and they may represent the original understanding. The Logos in the world and the world in the Logos, probably explains, for example, Paul's teaching that we are in Christ (e.g. Rom.12.5) and Christ is in us (e.g. Rom.8.10), and his address in Athens should be understood in the same way: 'In him we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17.28). Peter's sermon, too, calls Jesus the Source of Life (Acts 3.15) and the earliest eucharistic Prayer in the *Didache* emphasizes not the breaking of the bread but how it comes to be one loaf again:

> We give thanks to thee our Father, for the life and knowledge thou hast made known to us through thy servant Jesus . . . As this broken bread, once dispersed over the hills, was brought together and became one loaf, so may thy Church be brought together from the ends of the earth. (*Didache* 9)

This also underlies Paul's enigmatic words when he summarized the Christians' future hope: after the time of the Kingdom 'then shall the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, *that God may be all in all*' (1 Cor. 15.28, AV). A Gnostic text, the *Tripartite Tractate*, described the Saviour in the same way: 'The Saviour was a bodily image of the Unitary One. He is the Totality in bodily form' (C G I.5. 116). The angels were a unity,[25] and the Christians, as the angels on earth, were also to be a unity. This was the sign and the proof of their angelic state (John 17).

The Book of Jubilees describes how the ministering spirits were created on Day One:

> the angels of the presence, the angels of sanctification, the angels of the spirit of fire, the angels of the spirit of the winds, the angels of the spirit of the clouds and darkness and snow and hail and frost, the angels of the resounding and thunder and lightning, the angels of the spirits of cold and heat and winter and springtime and harvest and summer, and all of the spirits of his creatures which are in heaven and on earth. (*Jub.* 2.2)

This creation of the angels on Day One must have been a controversial matter since later scholars taught that the angels were created on the second day (R. Johanan) or on the fifth (R. Hanina). R. Luliani b.Tabri said in the name of R. Isaac: 'Whether we accept the view of R. Hanina or R. Johannan, all agree that no angels were created on the first day' (*Gen. R.* III.8). This was to emphasize that no angel had been the co-creator: 'I am the LORD who made all things, who stretched out the heavens alone, who spread out the earth. Who was with me?' (Isa. 44.24). We cannot be sure that everyone who heard the prophet's question would have given the same answer.

Many people knew more about Day One than appears in Genesis. The Song of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace (which appears in the Greek version of Daniel after Dan. 3.23 of the Hebrew text, and is also known as the Benedicite), calls on all creation, including the works of Day One, to bless the LORD, to praise him and exalt him for ever. The first twenty-three verses of the song describe the works of creation before those of the third day in Genesis. Before the three young men call on the earth to bless the LORD, they list what must have been the works of Day One: the throne of the kingdom in the firmament of heaven, the angels, the waters above the heavens, the powers, the sun, moon and stars, the weathers, the winds, the seasons, light and darkness, ice and cold, lightnings and clouds. This is very similar to the list in *Jubilees*.

One of the hitherto unknown Psalms found at Qumran is a hymn to the Creator which mentions the works of Day One: 'Loving kindness and truth are about his face; truth and judgement and righteousness are the pedestal of his throne. He divides light from obscurity; he establishes the dawn by the knowledge of his heart. When all his angels saw it, they sang ...' (11Q5 XXVI). Here it is the abstract qualities that are mentioned; truth, judgement and righteousness. Some of the biblical Psalms also describe what preceded the creation of the visible world. Psalm 89 depicts a heavenly assembly of holy ones, sons of the gods (Ps. 89.5–7), amongst whom the LORD was the greatest. The LORD of Hosts ruled over the raging sea, crushed the monster Rahab, created the north and the south and had for the foundation of his throne righteousness, justice, steadfast love and faithfulness (Ps. 89.14). Before he set the earth on its foundation, the LORD covered himself with light like a garment, stretched out the heavens, set the beams of his upper chambers on the waters and made the winds/spirits his angels, and fire and flame his servants (Ps. 104.1–5).

The 'Wisdom' writings found at Qumran also touch on this theme: there is the *raz nihyeh*, 'the mystery of existence' or perhaps it means 'the mystery to come' (4Q417, 418) and there are 'the mysteries of eternity' (4Q300) which could both be references to matters beyond the veil, 'eternity', Day One and whatever originates there.

> By day and by night, meditate on the *raz nihyeh*, and
> study it always ...
> For the God of knowledge is the foundation of truth, and
> by the *raz nihyeh* he had laid out its foundation and its deeds
> he has prepared with [...] Wisdom and with all cunning
> he has fashioned it ...
> And then you will know the glory of his might together
> with his marvellous mysteries and his mighty acts.

> For according to the pattern of the holy ones is his fashioning ...
> And you, O understanding child, gaze on the *raz nihyeh* and know the paths of everything that lives ... (4Q417.2 i and 4Q 418.43)[26]

Here, albeit in fragments, is the Day One that is missing from Genesis 1, the mystery of life that was revealed only to the wise. The mysteries were 'engraved' and everything was known and planned (cf. Eph. 1.9–10; Col. 1.26).[27]

The Book of Job affords glimpses of this fuller account of the creation, including the angels and many other details not included in Genesis. Job 26 implies that hostile beings were present at the creation; the shades and the inhabitants of the waters trembled before God as the north was stretched out over the void (*tohu*, as in Gen. 1.2) and the waters were bound up in thick clouds (Job 26.5–8). He enclosed the presence/face of the throne (rather than 'covers the face of the moon', Job 26.9), and marked out the circle on the waters between light and darkness. Then he stilled the sea and smote Rahab the sea monster, and in poetic parallel, he made the heavens fair with his spirit and pierced the serpent (Job 26.12–13). When the LORD laid the foundation of the earth and measured it out, 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy' (Job 38.7). There were, then, angels present on the third day when the foundations of the earth were laid, and they could be described as sons of God or as stars, and they made music. The Creator then set bounds for the proud waves of the sea (Job 38.8–11) and bound the constellations into their courses, and established some type of authority on the earth. The meaning is not clear because the word *miṣṭar* 'rule' does not occur elsewhere (Job 38.31–33). This creation account also mentions the dwelling of light, the storehouses of the snow and hail, and the source of the weathers: the east wind, the rain and the frost. Just as in *Jubilees*, the angels and the weathers appear as the works of Day One.

The Measurements

The Book of Job also mentions the measurements of the creation: the weight of the wind and the measure of the waters (Job 28.25), stretching out a line to measure the earth and numbering the clouds (Job 38.5,37). These various measurements are an important element in the secret knowledge of Day One.[28] The secret things of God are *higher* than heaven, *deeper* than Sheol, *longer* than the earth and *deeper* than the sea (Job 11.7–9). Job, who claimed to be a wise man, was challenged; did he know all these things? Eliphaz asked him if he was the first man who had stood in the council of God before the hills were made? (Job

15.7–8). The LORD asked him: 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?' (Job 38.4). The implication was that to be truly wise, one had to have stood in the beginning, in Day One, and seen the works of creation and learned the measurements. Others did claim this; they knew the secrets of creation and of history, and they had learned these when they stood in the presence of God. Since the throne was in the holy of holies, in Day One, the secrets of the creation were learned when certain people entered the holy of holies. They were revealed and learned 'in the beginning'. Hence the challenge in Isaiah: 'Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?' (Isa. 40.21). Something new was about to be created by the One who sits above the circle of the earth, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, who decides the fate of the rulers of the earth, who created, numbered and named all the host of heaven (Isa. 40. 22–26). This description of someone standing 'in the beginning' and learning the secrets of the creation and history appears frequently in later texts, but its occurrence here in the Second Isaiah shows it was known as early as the sixth century BCE and therefore antedates the present form of Genesis 1. Whatever 'Isaiah' knew, was known when Genesis 1 was written, but the author chose not to include it.

There is a lengthy account of this esoteric knowledge in *2 Baruch*, a book written after the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE. 'Baruch', writing as the scribe of Jeremiah who witnessed the destruction of the first temple in 586 BCE (Jer. 36.32), received some of his visions in the ruins of the temple 'where the high priests used to offer ... incense of fragrant spices' (*2 Bar. 35.1–4), in other words, he was in the holy of holies.* In one vision he learned what Moses had been shown on Sinai, apart from the ten commandments; measurements, weights, depths, numbers, times.

> the likeness of Zion with its measurements ... the measures of fire, the depths of the abyss, the weight of the winds, the number of the raindrops, the suppression of wrath, the abundance of long suffering, the truth of judgement, the root of wisdom, the richness of understanding, the fountain of knowledge, the height of the air, the greatness of Paradise, the ends of the periods, the beginning of the day of judgement, the number of offerings, the worlds which have not yet come, the mouth of hell, the standing place of vengeance, the place of faith, the region of hope, the picture of coming judgement, the multitude of the angels which cannot be counted, the powers of the flame, the splendour of lightnings, the voice of the thunders, the orders of the archangels, the treasuries of the light, the changes of the times and the enquiries into the Law. (*2 Bar.* 59.4–12)

Most of these are recognizable as the works of Day One, which one would expect for a vision in the holy of holies: the angels, the weathers and the virtues such as long-suffering and truth of judgement.[29] Others

are the weights and measures of the cosmos, and the vision of the judgement, which was associated with the holy of holies/Day One, as early as Psalm 73. Perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked, the psalmist 'went into the holy of holies of God' and there perceived their end (Ps. 73.17).

2 Esdras was written at the same time as *2 Baruch* and has a similar list of esoteric knowledge. Its purpose, however, was different. The archangel Uriel questioned Ezra, just as the LORD had questioned Job (Job 38–41): how could a human understand the ways of God if he could not understand the secrets of the creation? 'Go, weigh for me the weight of fire, or measure for me a measure of wind, or call back for me a day that is past' (*2 Esdr.* 4.5). Ezra admits that nobody can do these things. Further questioning reveals that the list of esoteric knowledge is a catalogue of what Ezra does not know: because he has never descended into the deep or ascended into heaven, he does not know about the dwellings in the heart of the sea, the streams at the source of the deep, the streams above the firmament, the exits of hell and the entrances of Paradise (*2 Esdr.* 4.9). This is reminiscent of the warning in Deuteronomy: 'The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law' (Deut. 29.29). 'For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you nor is it far off that you should say, "Who will go up for us to heaven and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it"' (Deut. 30.11–12). There was a long-standing controversy about this knowledge of Day One; it was apparent when Deuteronomy was compiled, and was still current at the close of the second temple period, when *2 Baruch* and *2 Esdras* gave opposing points of view. The knowledge itself was known to the 'Second Isaiah' and to the psalmist, and was debated in the Book of Job. The wise woman of Tekoa flattered David by reminding him that he had the wisdom of an angel of God, *to know all things on the earth* (2 Sam. 14.20).

This knowledge was also an important feature in the *Enoch* literature. In the first section of *1 Enoch*, generally agreed to be the earliest material in the book, Enoch is swept up into heaven to stand before the throne. Then he is taken on heavenly journeys and shown the secret things. He sees the treasuries where the stars are kept, the storehouses of the weathers, the mouths of the great rivers and the foundations of the earth. He sees the four winds/spirits who carry the firmament of heaven, and the winds which blow to drive the stars in their courses. He also sees the fiery abyss, where the rebel angels are thrown (*1 En.* 17–19). On a second journey he travels far and wide over the earth and sees mountains, forests and rivers. He reaches the portals of heaven through which the various winds and weathers have access to the earth.

The second section of *1 Enoch* is known as the *Parables*. In the first

'*Parable*', described as a 'vision of wisdom' (*1 En.* 37.1), Enoch, the high priest figure, was again swept up from the earth and set at the end of the heavens, where he saw the dwelling of the angels, the Chosen One under the wings of the LORD of Spirits, and the four presences. He heard angel voices singing 'Holy Holy Holy is the LORD of Spirits. He fills the earth with Spirits'. This is like Isaiah's vision, and Enoch has become part of it. He was in the temple, as was Isaiah (Isa. 6.1–5), and he was by the throne in the holy of holies (*1 En.* 39–40). One of the angels showed Enoch 'all the hidden things', 'the secrets of the heavens' (*1 En.* 40.2; 41.1), i.e. the things of the holy of holies, Day One. He learned 'how the kingdom is divided and the actions of men are weighed' (*1 En.* 41.1). *Dividing the Kingdom is a reference to the very first process of creation: dividing the original unity of Day One, the Kingdom, into the many things of the visible creation. Division and separation is the theme throughout Genesis 1.* He saw the judgement and punishment of sinners, and then he saw the secrets of the weathers, and the oath which bound the sun and moon in their orbits. Then he saw the lightnings and stars of heaven (*1 En.* 43.1), and how the great Holy One called them by name and weighed them so that their light was the correct proportion. Each was linked to an angel, and each had a counterpart among 'the holy who dwell on earth' (*1 En.* 43.4). Perhaps this means the same as that enigmatic line in Job 38.33: 'Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?' There is also something similar in *Jubilees*, that on Day One all the spirits of his creatures in heaven and on earth were created (*Jub.* 2.2), implying a heavenly archetype for the creatures on earth. The reverse of this process is implied in Daniel: 'Those who turn many to righteousness shall shine like stars for ever and ever' (Dan. 12.3), that is, the holy ones will return to heaven as stars.

There is a similar list in the third *Parable*. Enoch learned the secrets of the lightning and the thunder (*1 En.* 59.1–3) and then the first and last in the height of heaven, and the depth beneath the earth, the ends of heaven and the foundation of the heaven, and then the weathers (*1 En.* 60.11–15). Perhaps the most significant of all is the list which appears at the end of the Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 En.* 93.11–14), which predicts that at the end of the second temple period with its apostate generation in Jerusalem, a chosen group of Righteous would appear who would receive the sevenfold instruction concerning the creation.[30] It is interesting that scholars have deemed these verses out of place; they do not fit here, apparently! These wise ones at the end of the seventh week, in complete contrast to the apostates, would behold the heaven and know what was there, and know the breadth and length of the earth, and the height and foundations of the heaven and the number of the stars and where the luminaries rest. The apostate generation, by implication, were those who did not have/value this knowledge of Day

One. *They were also the people who had written Genesis 1, which says so little about it. This cannot be coincidence.*

The *Second Book of Enoch* also has lists of knowledge, and describes clearly the context in which it was acquired. Enoch, the high priest, ascended through the seven heavens and entered the presence of the LORD. He was stripped of his earthly clothing, anointed and given garments of divine glory (*2 En.* 22). He saw that he had become an angel. In other words, Enoch the high priest was taken from his mortal body, anointed with Wisdom, the gift of eternal life, and given his resurrection body, his garment of glory. He was then instructed in wisdom by one of the archangels, Vrevoil[31] and the great books were read to him. He learned about

> all things of heaven and earth and sea, and all the elements and the movements and their courses, and the living thunder and the sun and moon and stars, their course and their changes and seasons and years and days and hours, and the coming of the clouds and the blowing of the winds, and the number of the angels and the songs of the armed troops, and every kind of human thing and every kind of language and singing, and human life and rules and instructions and sweet voiced singing and everything that it is appropriate to learn. (*2 En.* 23.1–2)

Enoch then watched as the six days of creation appeared before him. Later, Enoch recounted all this to his children. The summary does not mention the heavenly singing, but lists knowledge of astronomy, seasons, weathers, time, and the place where the wicked are punished, and concludes by saying that Enoch measured all the earth, 'mountains, hills, fields, woods, stones, rivers and everything that exists' (*2 En.* 40.12).

Metatron, the Prince of the Divine Presence revealed to R. Ishmael that when he had been enthroned at the entrance to the seventh palace in heaven, he was taught the mysteries of wisdom. 'All the mysteries of the world and all the orders of nature, stand revealed before me as they stand revealed before the Creator. From that time onward I looked and beheld deep secrets and wonderful mysteries' (*3 En.* 11.1–3). He was given a crown on which were inscribed the letters by which everything was created, and after this all the angels of Day One had to serve him: the angels of fire, hail, wind, lightning, whirlwind, thunder, snow, rain, day, night, sun, moon and stars (*3 En.* 14.2; cf. Phil. 2.9–11).

Once the knowledge of Day One has been identified, it is possible to recognize the allusions in several other texts. The great poem in Job 28 denies that human skills can lead to wisdom. Wisdom and the place of understanding are hidden from mortal eyes, but God knows their place.

> For he looks to the ends of the earth, and sees everything under the heavens.
> When he gave the wind its weight, and meted out the waters by measure;

> when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder;
> then he saw it and declared it; he established it and searched it out. (Job 28. 24–27)

The opening words of the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira are another summary of this knowledge, again in terms of measurements:

> All wisdom comes from the LORD and is with him for ever.
> The sand of the sea, the drops of rain, and the days of eternity – who can count them?
> The height of the heaven, the breadth of the earth, the abyss and wisdom – who can search them out?
> Wisdom was created before all things, and prudent understanding from eternity.
> The source of Wisdom is God's word in the highest heaven, and her ways are the eternal commandments. (*Ben Sira* 1.1–5)

Ben Sira 16.24–30 also describes 'the beginning'. Everything was created, divided and put in order from the beginning, before 'the LORD looked on the earth and filled it with good things' (*Ben Sira* 16.29). There is yet another description in chapter 43, in which the first mighty works of creation are the sun, moon and stars, the rainbow and the various weathers, and they are followed by the subjugation of the sea (*Ben Sira* 43.23).

There is a pattern underlying all these lists, and, combining their information, the older creation story emerges. Certain people – Job describes them as 'the first man' – witness what takes place before the earth is set in order. They stand in the hidden place, or 'in the beginning', both descriptions of the holy of holies/Day One. They learn about the angels, known as the sons of God and the morning stars, they learn about the weathers, the measurements and divisions of the creation, the orbits of the sun, moon and stars, the calendar, the heavenly music, the abstract qualities such as goodness, and the place of punishment for evil doers.

This was known to the first Christians. The *Gospel of Philip* says: 'At the present time we have the manifest things of the creation ... the mysteries of truth are revealed though in type and image. The bridal chamber remains hidden. It is the holy in the holy. The veil at first concealed how God controlled the creation' (CG II.3.84). The holy of holies to which Christians claimed access (Heb. 4.14–16; Rev. 22.4) is the key to a particular understanding of the world – visible and invisible – which is celebrated in the Liturgy. An over simplistic reading of the ancient texts can obscure this.

The Place of the Throne

The holy of holies is described in 1 Kings 6 as a wooden cube of side twenty cubits, overlaid with gold, and constructed within the temple. Some of the words in the account are not easy to translate; the 'chains' across the front of the sanctuary may be something else, perhaps a means of enclosing or separating the special area (cf. Isa. 40.19 which has a similar word and a similar problem), and the 'inner sanctuary' (thus RSV) is the word *d'bir*, formerly thought to mean 'the oracle' (thus AV), but the more recent fashion is to translate it 'inner or hinder part'. The Greek simply transliterates and keeps *dabeir*. 'Oracle' is the more likely meaning, in view of the traditions associated with this part of the temple/tabernacle. This is where the LORD spoke to Moses (Exod. 25.22) and appeared to the high priest (Lev. 16.2). To the end of the second temple period, this is where people heard the voice of the LORD: just before the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, it was widely reported that voices had been heard there. The priests serving in the temple at night during the feast of Pentecost heard noises and 'a voice as of a host "we are departing hence" ' (Josephus, *War* 6.299–300). Even the Roman historian Tacitus had heard of the voices which announced that the gods were leaving their temple (*Histories* 5.130). The Book of Revelation records the same phenomenon: a voice 'from heaven' telling his people to leave the doomed city (Rev. 18.4). In other words, it is unlikely that *d'bir* ever meant 'the back end' of the temple.

Within this 'oracle' were two huge wooden cherubim overlaid with gold, and the ark of the covenant was brought into it when the temple was consecrated (1 Kgs 8.6–9). There is a second account of the holy of holies in Chronicles with additional information; a huge amount of gold was used in its construction (2 Chron. 3.8–9), and, despite some English versions, nothing is said of the cherubim being made of wood, only that they were images overlaid with gold (2 Chron. 3.10). The most significant differences between this account and that in 1 Kings, however, are that the cherubim are said to form a chariot throne (1 Chron. 28.18), that there is the veil before the holy of holies (2 Chron. 3.14) and that there are 'upper chambers' lined with gold (2 Chron. 3.9). Since the Chronicler was a writer with priestly sympathies and the person who compiled the books of Kings was influenced by the ideals of Deuteronomy and therefore out of sympathy with the temple and its 'secret things' (Deut. 29.29), there may have been something about the upper chambers, the veil and the chariot, that was significant for the secret things of the priesthood. The inner sanctuary was a veiled cube of pure gold wherein was the throne of the LORD.

The holy of holies was also described as a tower or high place. Isaiah's watchtower which the LORD built in his vineyard (Isa. 5.2) was understood to refer to the holy of holies, and Habakkuk 'stood' (the

word can mean 'took his turn at priestly service') on the tower to watch for a vision from the LORD (Hab. 2.1). No explanation of these 'towers' is offered in the biblical text, but the enigmatic animal fables in *1 Enoch*, which sketch a history of Israel, describe the temple as a great and broad house, on which a lofty and great tower was built for the LORD of the sheep (*1 En.* 89.50). The LORD stood on the tower and a full table was offered before him. The building of the second temple is described as rebuilding the tower (*1 En.* 89.73). The whole history of his people was being shown to Enoch in a vision, and he was watching this from his place on the tower. Three archangels had taken him up to a lofty place, far above the hills, and there he watched history unfold before him (*1 En.* 87.3). A later collection of *Enoch* material describes how Enoch stood on the far side of the veil in the holy of holies and watched all history as though on a screen before him (*3 En.* 45), just as Isaiah had done when he was shown 'from the beginning' how princes and rulers of the earth were brought to nothing (Isa. 40.21–23).

Isaiah, a prophet in the time of the first temple, saw the LORD enthroned in the holy of holies, and *his train filled the temple.* He saw seraphim ('burning ones') and heard voices crying, 'Holy Holy Holy is the LORD of Hosts *the whole earth is full of his glory*' (Isa. 6.1–3). When this was translated into Greek it became: 'The house was filled with his glory' and 'the whole earth is full of his glory'. Thus the translator made explicit what the Hebrew reader would have understood: that the temple was a microcosm of the earth, and so the glory filling the temple was the same as the glory filling the earth. Isaiah knew that the holy of holies was the place of the throne and of the fiery heavenly beings, and that the great hall of the temple was the visible creation.

Ezekiel offers another picture from the first temple. He was described as a priest (Ezek. 1.3), and he was taken to Babylon with the first exiles in 596 BCE (implied in Ezek. 40.1). He prophesied but cannot have known the second temple, and so his vision of the throne chariot leaving the temple and appearing by the River Chebar *must reflect what was believed about the throne, and therefore about the holy of holies, by a priest of the first temple.* There are two accounts of a throne vision: the first, when the chariot appeared by the River Chebar (Ezek. 1.1–28) and the second, when the Glory was leaving the temple in Jerusalem (Ezek. 10.1–22 and 11.22–23). Ezekiel (or his editor) emphasized that the vision of the Glory leaving the temple was the same as the vision which he had seen by the River Chebar, and that the 'living creatures' were the same as the cherubim (Ezek. 10.15, 20). Why, one wonders, was it necessary to emphasize that the living creatures were the cherubim? Perhaps because this was an innovation and they had not always been so? Over the ark there had been a pair of golden cherubim (Exod. 25.18), and Solomon had set two in the holy of holies (1 Kgs 6.23), to form the throne chariot (1 Chron. 28.18), but the living creatures were

remembered as a group of four. Later confusion over the number of their heads and faces is another indication that memories had been fused and confused. The four living creatures in John's vision of the heavenly throne are a lion, an ox, a man and an eagle, having one face each (Rev. 4.6–7). In Ezekiel's vision each of the four apparently had four faces (Ezek. 1.5–6), but there are two versions of what these faces were: a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle (Ezek. 1.10) and a cherub, a man, a lion and an eagle (Ezek. 10.14). These two are the only 'living creatures' visions in the Bible, and each involves the receiving and eating of a scroll. It seems as though there had been two different thrones, one between the two cherubim, giving a tradition of three, and another in the midst of four presences, giving the tradition of four/five.

There are other descriptions of the holy of holies. The earliest material in *1 Enoch* describes how Enoch was taken in his vision into heaven, where he saw first a building of crystal and fire. Then he was summoned into a second, inner house which was built entirely of fire. He saw a throne with shining wheels, and from the throne there flowed streams of fire. Only the most holy ones could enter; the lower angels remained outside, just as the lesser priests were forbidden to enter the holy of holies in the temple (*1 En.* 14.21). On the throne was the Great Glory, surrounded by fire, and countless hosts stood before him.

All the so-called *Parables of Enoch* are holy of holies visions and, since no evidence for them has been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is no proof of their age. The *Parables* end with an account of angels with radiant robes and faces, and two rivers of fire (*1 En.* 71). Michael took Enoch by his right hand and led him up into the heaven of heavens to show him all the secret knowledge: the secrets of mercy and righteousness, and the treasuries of the stars. He saw a house of crystal and fire, and he saw a girdle of fire encircling the structure. He also saw cherubim, seraphim and ophanim, the 'wheels', encircling the structure, together with countless angels. Four of them are named as the archangels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Phanuel, and the Great Glory in this vision is named the Head of Days or the Antecedent of Time.[32] Since the holy of holies was Day One and outside time, this latter is probably the more appropriate rendering. Enoch is then commissioned as a special agent for the Antecedent of Time, but the text is too damaged and obscure to know for certain what this was. It seems that Enoch was to bring the peace and righteousness of the eternal world to those who were to join themselves to him.

> For from here proceeds peace since the creation of the world, and so it shall be unto you for ever and ever and ever. Everyone that will come to exist shall [follow] your path, since righteousness never forsakes you. Together with you shall be their dwelling places, and together with you shall be their portion. They shall not be separated from you for ever and ever and ever. (*1 En.* 71.15–16)

Those who had entered the holy of holies were transformed by the experience. Two remarkable passages in *3 Enoch* describe how Enoch, who had ascended to heaven and become Metatron, was transformed into a fiery figure. The description – the fire, the huge size, the many 'eyes' – suggests that he had become the Living One of Ezekiel's vision: 'The Holy One, blessed be he, laid his hand on me and blessed me with 1,365,000 blessings. I was enlarged and increased in size until I matched the world in length and breadth. He made to grow on me 72 wings ... and each single wing covered the whole world. He fixed in me 365,000 eyes, and each eye was like the great light' (*3 En.* 9); 'When the Holy One, blessed be he, took me to serve the throne of glory ... at once my flesh turned to flame, my sinews to blazing fire, my bones to juniper coals ...' (*3 En.* 15).

Something similar must underlie John's Prologue. A figure from the presence of God, who is the Presence of God, comes into the world, and 'to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God' (John 1.12). The New Testament develops the idea of the One who incorporates all into himself and thus gives them Life and they become a new creation.

The Living One

Ezekiel was a priest, and the 'thirtieth year' (Ezek. 1.1) was thought to refer to the prophet's age rather than the date of the vision as long ago as Origen (*On Ezekiel*, Homily 1). If this is so, then the vision was probably Ezekiel's experience of ordination, since priests entered temple service at the age of thirty and served for twenty years (Num. 4.3). There can have been no temple service in exile, but the priests kept their identity, and there seems to have been a priestly settlement at Casiphia (Ezra 8.16–17). Perhaps the scroll he was given was equivalent to the 'secret things' of the holy of holies which he, as a priest, would have learned (cf. 2 Kgs 11.12, where the newly crowned king is given the testimony, a ritual which survives in the 'memory' of the Deuteronomists as the king having a copy of the Law (Deut. 17.18)). What is certain is that this passage in Ezekiel is in places unreadable. There are several words which do not occur elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g. the letters translated 'flash of lightning' v.14 are *bzq*, an otherwise unknown word, which may not mean lightning) or else only in a comparable vision (e.g. 'burnished' *qll*, which occurs also in Dan. 10.6, to describe a heavenly being). A comparison of translations of Ezekiel 1 (say the AV, the RSV and the NEB) will show the difficulties presented by this chapter. The footnotes of the NEB, for example, admit 'Hebrew unintelligible' for part of v.11, 'Hebrew obscure' for the beginning of v.14 and the end of v.15, and several 'probable readings'. Throughout, there is change between singular and plural, masculine

and feminine forms. 'Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures with his four faces', the AV of v. 15, will illustrate the point. This is a literal rendering of the text, but the English obscures the fact that the living creatures here are a feminine plural noun, and so 'his four faces' is unexpected. St Jerome (*On Ezek.* 1.1.19) thought this mixing of genders was to show that in the heavenly state, neither male nor female was an appropriate designation: the being 'is called both a man and a woman'. Elsewhere, there is a singular 'being'. This is what one would expect in a holy of holies vision: these were beings from Day One, beyond the veil, and a gendered body was only necessary in the material world. Thus when God creates humans in his image, he has to create a male and a female (Gen. 1.26–28), and when Christians have been baptised into Christ, the risen LORD, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3.27–28). We are accustomed to reading a mixture of singular and plural in the Hebrew Scriptures, but this is masked in the English translations. The word *'elohim*, usually translated simply as God, singular, is in fact a plural noun, although sometimes it has to be rendered as a plural. Thus in Psalm 82.1 *'elohim* occurs twice; the first instance is rendered 'God' and the second 'gods', to give the familiar English: '*God* has taken his place in the divine council, in the midst of the *gods* he holds judgement.' Were we as familiar with the Living One as we are with God, *'elohim*, the translations of Ezekiel might have offered, for example, 'the fiery Fourfold Living One in human form'. To substitute *Living One* in the texts gives a very different picture.

Ezekiel seems to have described a stormy wind and a cloud flashing with fire, in whose midst were four (feminine) Living One(s) 'and their appearance was the likeness of a human'. They had four faces (the word also means 'presences'), and four wings and human hands. Each pair of upwards spreading wings touched those on either side, and the other pair of wings covered the body. In the midst of the Living One(s) was something that looked like fiery torches moving to and fro, and the Living One(s) moved quickly to and fro. There was also a wheel on the earth by 'the Living One(s) with his four faces', apparently one wheel for each of the four. The wheels (*ophanim*, plural, distinguished from *galgal*, whirling wheel, singular, which occurs in Ezek.10) looked like the gleam of *tarshish*, a yellow precious stone, and their appearance and construction was like a wheel within a wheel. There were rings, v.18 (thus AV but 'rims' RSV), high (RSV 'spokes') and fearful (apparently), and full of eyes all round. Since 'eyes' is the word that means 'gleam' in v.16, it should probably be rendered in the same way here, but may mean stars. Two generations after Ezekiel, Zechariah described the lamps of the menorah as the 'eyes' of the LORD wandering through the whole earth (Zech. 4.10). Ezekiel saw tall and fearful rings, sparkling or

full of wandering stars, around the Living One(s). The wheels move beside the Living One(s), rising up from the earth with them. Wherever the Spirit went, the wheels lifted up alongside, for the Spirit of the Living One (feminine singular) or 'the Spirit of Life' was in the wheels, v.20. This movement is emphasized in the following verse, and again, it is a singular feminine noun: 'the Spirit of the Living One' or ' the Spirit of Life' was in the wheels. The mixture of singular and plural continues in v. 22: 'The likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the Living One was like the gleam of terrible ice [or crystal] stretched out over their heads above' (LXX has 'over their wings'). Above this firmament was the 'likeness of a throne' and on the throne, the likeness of a human, as was said of the living creatures in v.5. The fiery figure appeared like *hashmal*, an unknown substance but thought to be electrum or perhaps amber. The figure was surrounded by brightness like a rainbow, and this was described as the likeness of the glory of the LORD, v.28.

What Ezekiel described must have been 'his' holy of holies, appearing to him in exile. There are two parts to this vision; the figure on the throne, described as the likeness of the glory of the LORD enthroned above the firmament, and then whatever was beneath the firmament. This seems to have been a fourfold Living One, a female figure, known as the Spirit of Life, or perhaps it was the Spirit of Life within a fourfold group of Living Ones. There were in this being four 'faces/presences', and it is interesting that there were four 'presences' around the throne in Enoch's vision. There, they were identified as the four archangels: 'On the four sides of the LORD of Spirits I saw four presences' (*1 En.* 40.1), and they were identified by Enoch's angel guide as Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Phanuel. Ezekiel saw 'wheels', and there were also 'rings' which may have been the rims of the wheels, or they may have been rings of light, corresponding to the ring of light like a rainbow that surrounded the upper part of the vision. The sound of the Living One(s) was like the sound of many waters, the sound/voice of Shaddai v. 24. According to the second vision, 'This was the Living One [the Hebrew is feminine singular] that I saw beneath the God of Israel at the River Chebar' (Ezek. 10.20).

There is a second description of the Living One(s) in chapter 10, Ezekiel's vision of the glory leaving the temple. In each case we are told that the prophet heard a sound of wings, and this was like the voice of El Shaddai (10.5 cf. Shaddai, 1.24), which was an ancient name for God. Shaddai is usually translated 'Almighty', but the meaning of the word is not known for certain. It could mean violent or mighty; the Latin Vulgate usually translated it *omnipotens*, and the LXX had often used the Greek equivalent *Pantocrator*, giving the English 'Almighty'. Where Shaddai occurs in the Pentateuch, however, Shaddai is rendered 'my', 'your' or 'their'. Thus 'I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob

as El Shaddai' became in the LXX 'I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, being their God' (Exod. 6.3; similarly in Gen. 17.1; 28.3; 35.11; 43.14; 48.3; 49.25). Sometimes there is no equivalent word at all, as in the Balaam oracles (Num. 24.4,16), or in Psalm 68.14 or in Joel 1.15. Shaddai is used most frequently in the Book of Job, where it is sometimes rendered by Kurios, the LORD, sometimes by Pantocrator, the Almighty, and sometimes, again, there is no equivalent word at all.

Etymology, however, affords some interesting possibilities. There is a very similar word meaning demons or protecting spirits, *shediym*, to whom children were sacrificed (Ps. 106.37 cf. Deut. 32.17) and another with the same consonants but pronounced differently, *shadayim*, meaning breasts. In the stories of the Patriarchs, Shaddai is linked to fertility; the blessing of Shaddai brings fruitfulness and many children (Gen. 28.3; 35.11; 48.3–4). El Shaddai blesses with blessings from heaven above, and from the deep beneath, from the breasts and from the womb (Gen. 49.25). El Shaddai was remembered as the older deity, the God of the patriarchs, whom the compiler of the Pentateuch identified as the LORD, the God of Moses (Exod. 6.3). Somewhere here we probably glimpse a protecting deity in male and female form, more ancient than Moses, to whom children were sacrificed. Abraham was told to sacrifice his son, but then, as the story was later retold, allowed to offer a substitute. It was the sound of this deity that Ezekiel must have heard leaving the city, which would account for the ambiguous gender of the Living One in his vision.

This male/female breasted deity was to reappear in early Christian hymns, only to be identified as a textual problem, or evidence of Hindu influence, rather than as a fascinating piece of evidence for the survival of Shaddai.

> Because his breasts were full,
> And it was undesirable that his milk should be
> ineffectually released,
> The holy Spirit opened her bosom
> And mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father,
> Then she gave the mixture to the world without their
> knowing,
> And those who have received it are in the perfection of
> the right hand.
>
> (*Odes of Solomon* 19.3–5)

In both chapter 1 and chapter 10 there is information about the motion of the Living One(s), that they did not turn (Ezek. 1.9, 12, 17; 10.11), but rose up from the earth (Ezek. 1.21; 10.15, 16, 17, 19). There are the same ambiguities, and there is the same opacity: 'And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been

in the midst of a wheel' (Ezek. 10.10, AV). The exact relationship of the one and the four is not clear: 'the likeness of One had they all four' has been suggested as a suitably ambiguous rendering of Ezekiel 1.16 and Ezekiel 10.10 (BDB, p.198 *d'mut*). There is the same confusion of singular and plural as occurs in the first chapter, and there are words whose meaning is unknown. The fullest description of the Living One(s) is in v.12. 'All their body' (singular body, plural suffix) was full of 'eyes' or perhaps points of light. In addition to their 'body' (a problematic word to which we shall return), there is another unknown word, and then there are their hands, wings and wheels (all familiar words). The unknown word is variously rendered 'backs' or 'spokes'. The next verse, v.13, is also opaque. It could mean 'In my ears, the whirling wheel [or the whirlwind], called to the wheels' or it could mean any of the variants offered by the standard translations: 'As for the wheels it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel' (thus AV) or 'As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing the whirling wheels' (thus RSV, but not accurate because 'whirling wheel' is singular in the Hebrew here). Another remarkable piece of evidence from this chapter is the three references to the Living One (feminine singular) in vv. 15, 17, 20. In each case the RSV mistranslates and gives a plural, thus obscuring important information about the vision. The AV has correctly: 'This [it could be translated 'she'] is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar' (v. 15); 'For the spirit of the living creature was in them' (v. 17; presumably the spirit was in the wheels, cf. Ezek. 1.21); and 'This/she is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar' (v.20).

The words translated 'all their body' *kl bśrm*, v.12, are opaque. The same expression elsewhere however (without the 'their') means 'all flesh' in the sense of 'all created beings'. Thus the LORD provides food for 'all flesh' (Ps. 136.25) and without the Spirit, 'all flesh' would perish (Job 34.15), suggesting in the latter case that the Spirit is the continual source of life for 'all flesh' (also Lev. 17.14; Num. 18.15; Joel 2.28). Could this mean that 'all creatures' were somehow present in the fiery vision, and the Living Creature was itself/herself the Source of Life or perhaps the vessel in which all life was held? That is what was believed by the later Merkavah mystics, who described all the souls of the righteous in a storehouse by the throne, the souls of those who had already lived on earth and returned, and the souls of those yet to live on earth (*3 En.* 43). This Enoch text did not reach its present form until perhaps the fifth century CE, but the *Book of Jubilees*, of unknown date, but in existence by the end of the second century BCE, records the same belief. On Day One, when the LORD created the angels and all the ministering spirits, he created 'all the spirits of his creatures which are in heaven and on earth' (*Jub.* 2.2). As they were the creatures of Day One, they would have been near the throne. Perhaps Ezekiel's curious

mixture of singular and plural forms is pointing to a similar idea. The Hebrew text of *Ben Sira* 49.8 is different from the Greek; instead of 'It was Ezekiel who saw the vision of Glory which [God] showed him above the chariot of the cherubim' there is 'he described the mixed kinds of the chariot'. Were these the curious living creatures, or were they something else?

Who or what was the Living One whom Ezekiel saw 'under the God of Israel'? She was a compound, fourfold presence, a fiery winged figure, surrounded by wheels within wheels which were full of points of light. There is repeated reference in the visions to human hands (Ezek. 1.8; 10.7–8, 12, 21), and these hands were under the wings, but the Hebrew word here translated 'wing' can also mean the edge of a garment or a skirt (as in Ezek. 5.3; Hag. 2.12). The prophet received a scroll from an outstretched hand (Ezek. 2.9), and this was probably a hand from the Living One, perhaps from under the edge of her robe or wings. Ezekiel the young priest received the scroll from the Living One whom he saw under the throne in his vision. This Living One must have belonged in his temple, and she had four faces/presences. This is an important link to later Christian debates about the Trinity and the nature of the Incarnation. As early as the time of Ezekiel, in other words, from the time of the first temple, the manifold presence of the divine had been described as faces/presences, and this word *panim*, translated literally into Greek, became the *prosopa*, usually translated 'persons' which were central to the debates about the Trinity and the Incarnation.

Some texts suggest that a female figure was to be found in the holy of holies. Proverbs 8.22–31 is an enigmatic poem about Wisdom, 'brought forth' before the creation and working beside the Creator, an idea repeated in *Ben Sira* 24.9 where Wisdom is created 'in the beginning' and serves as a minister in the tabernacle. The same female figure appears in Revelation 11.19–12.6, as a woman clothed with the sun who gives birth to the Messiah. She is a portent in heaven as the holy of holies opens to reveal the ark. Nobody can know how many of these ideas were known to Ezekiel, the priest from the first temple. He could well have known the Wisdom figure mentioned in Proverbs 8, whose role is described but not her appearance. Was 'the first to be brought forth' (Prov. 8.24) a fiery 'living being' such as Ezekiel attempted to describe? As he was by the waters of the River Chebar and saw the heavens open, was he in fact seeing the Spirit who first fluttered over the waters of the creation (Gen. 1.2)? There is no description of the Spirit in Genesis, and so we cannot know what the writer had in his mind. Fluttering (Gen. 1.2) does suggest wings. Perhaps she was the fiery Spirit whom Ezekiel saw, the prophet and the compiler of Genesis being almost contemporaries.

The translators of the LXX also knew of a fourfold being whom they

called the Angel of Great Counsel, i.e. the Wise Angel. This was their translation of the four throne titles of Isaiah 9.6: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'. A fourfold figure also appears in the later Jewish mystical texts. In the *Hekhalot Rabbati*, for example, there are titles for the LORD which clearly have 'fourfold' as their meaning. Tootrusea – imitating the sound of Greek words – comes from *tetra*, four, and *ousia*, a word meaning 'essence' or, in magic: 'a material thing by which a connexion is established between the person to be acted upon and the supernatural agent'.[33] It has been suggested that Tootrusea indicates 'the essence of the four [lettered Name]' but 'a fourfold essence' is more likely, since the Greek-speaking Jews who must have originated this title wrote the Name with only three letters: IAO. Thus we read, for example: 'R. Ishmael said: Thus said R. Nehunya ben Hakkanah: Tootrusea YHVH LORD of Israel dwells in seven palaces, in the innermost room thereof'. (#206); and 'R. Ishmael said: When you come and stand at the gate of the first palace, take two seals, one in each hand, [the seals] of Tootrousea YHVH LORD of Israel and of Surya, the Angel of the Presence.' (#219). Glory of God and Tootrusea are the divine names found most frequently in the *Hekhalot Rabbati*.[34]

A fourfold female figure had an important place in the Gnostic systems as they are depicted in later texts. She appears with the name Barbelo, most likely derived from the Hebrew *be'arba'*, 'in four' and *'eloah*, an ancient form of the word for God often used in conjunction with Shaddai for example in Job. The form of the word – *'el* 'God' with the feminine ending – looks as though it was the unthinkable: a female deity. Although there have been various suggestions as to the meaning of the name Barbelo, it must have meant 'the fourfold divinity', and in several of the Gnostic systems known from later texts she was the second of the divine beings. The *Apocryphon of John* (CG II.1), a broken text, describes her thus:

> the glory of Barbelo, the perfect glory in the aeons, the glory of the revelation, she glorified the virginal spirit and it was she who praised him because thanks to him she had come forth. This is the first thought, his image. She became the womb of everything, for it she who is prior to them all, the Mother-Father, the first man, the holy spirit, the thrice male, the thrice powerful, the thrice named androgynous one, the eternal aeon among the invisible ones and the first to come forth. (*Ap. Jo.* 5)

> This is the five aeon of the Father which is the first man, the image of the invisible spirit, it is the Pronoia which is Barbelo, the thought and the foreknowledge and the indestructibility and the eternal life and the truth. This is the androgynous five aeon, which is the ten aeon which is the Father. (*Ap. Jo.* 6)

Zostrianos (CG VIII.1), a baptismal text, also describes the fivefold aeon. 'Now the divine self originate [aeon] is the first ruler of its aeons

and of the angels, as though they were parts of it. For considered individually the four belong to it. The fifth aeon consists of them all together, and the fifth exists as one. The four [make up] the fifth in respect of its parts ...' (*Zostrianos* 19). 'They exist conjointly for they all reside within one single aeon of the concealed [aeon] ... [Now] the concealed aeon is one single aeon; [it] comprises four varieties of aeon ... All living beings are there, existing individually yet joined together ...' (*Zostrianos* 116–17).

In the *Melchizedek* text (CG IX.1), another broken piece, she seems to be described as the mother of the aeons (*Melch.* 17), and in *Allogenes* (CG XI. 3) she is 'endowed with the patterns and forms of those who truly exist, the image of the Hidden One' (*All.* 51). The *First Thought in Three Forms* (CG XIII.1) describes Barbelo as the Thought in the Light, the Movement in the All: 'I dwell in those who came to be, I move in everyone, ... I am the sight of those who dwell in sleep. I am the invisible One within the All ... I am immeasurable, ineffable and whenever I wish ... I reveal myself.' She is 'the perfect glory of the immeasurable Invisible One who is hidden' and she is 'the Image of the Invisible Spirit through whom all took shape' (*First Thought* 35, 38).

The most remarkable picture of the fourfold figure appears in what is probably a collection of Gnostic hymns, known as *The Three Steles of Seth* (CG VII.5). Barbelo is described as male and female, one who has moved from the upper realm to the lower:

> O You who have been divided into the quintet ... O You who have emanated from the superior [realm] and for the sake of the inferior [realm] have gone forth into the middle ... We praise you O thrice male, for you have unified the entirety from out of all ... You stood at rest, you stood at rest in the beginning, you have become divided everywhere, you have remained One. (*Three Steles* 120–21)

> Great is the first aeon, male virginal Barbelo, she who is called perfect. Thou [fem.] hast seen first him who really pre-exists, that he is non-being and from him and through him thou hast pre-existed eternally ... We bless thee, producer [fem.] of perfection, aeon giver [fem.], thou hast [seen] the eternal ones that they are from shadow ... and thou art one [fem.] of the one [masc.] And thou art a shadow of him, thou a hidden one ... (*Three Steles* 122)

> We have beheld that which is really first existent ... For your light is shining on us ... Command us to behold you so that we might be saved. (*Three Steles* 124–25)

Barbelo corresponds in many ways to Wisdom,[35] to the figure whom Ezekiel saw leaving the temple, and to the female figure who appears anonymously elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures. 'Hidden One' or 'Eternal One' is the literal translation of what is traditionally rendered 'the Virgin' in Isaiah 7.14; the Hebrew does not have '*a* virgin shall conceive' but '*the* Virgin [hidden one, eternal one] shall conceive', and the translators of the LXX thought 'the Virgin' the appropriate

translation, even though they could have opted for the more literal 'young woman'. Was the heavenly Virgin the figure they had in mind? The people of ancient Ugarit had had among their divinities a Great Lady, the Virgin mother of the seventy sons of El, just as the Virgin Barbelo was the mother of the aeons. Ezekiel had seen the image of a Great Lady in his vision of the temple, and the sons of God were known in the Hebrew Scriptures. A divine figure who must have been androgynous created male and female in its image (Gen. 1.26–27), and, like Barbelo, Ezekiel's Living One was both male and female.

The great Wisdom poem in Proverbs 8 may reveal more than the customary translations allow us to see, and it is quite legitimate to ask if the Barbelo figure can illuminate any of the ambiguous or opaque Hebrew. Wisdom is usually presented as simply a divine attribute, which is what the exegetes wish her to be, an attribute personified in later texts. What the poem in Proverbs 8 actually says twice is that she was 'brought forth' (Prov. 8.24–25, *ḥll*, a word meaning brought to birth, for which the LXX used *ktizein*, create/produce) and that this happened before the visible creation had been formed. She was also 'begotten' (Prov. 8.22, *qnh*, a word whose meaning is often avoided; the LXX used *gennan*, to beget) but which appears elsewhere in the context of the children of God and the sons of God. It is translated: 'Is he not your Father who *created* you?' (Deut. 32.6); in Psalm 139.13 it is: 'Thou didst *form* my inward parts and didst knit me together in my mother's womb'; and in Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham, it is: 'God Most High, *maker* of heaven and earth' (Gen. 14.19; also 22). Given that Wisdom was 'brought to birth', it is not likely that she was also 'begotten' rather than just formed or made? Wisdom was also the 'Amon', the 'master workman' (Prov. 8.30, for which the LXX used *harmozousa*, 'the female who joins together or tunes'). This is very like the description in *Zostrianos*: 'All living beings are there, existing individually yet joined together.' The word *Amon*, however, may have been understood in another way as well. Written in the same way, but maybe pronounced differently, it meant nurse (Num. 11.12), and there was a similar word also meaning nurse (Ruth 4.16). The related verb meant 'carry a child' (Isa. 60.4). Similar-sounding words also meant such things as faithful, established and secure.[36] If there had been parallel understandings of the meaning of *Amon* as a title of Wisdom, then these must have originated from the Hebrew stage of the tradition, and even from the oral stage, where such an ambiguity would have been possible.

Wisdom was begotten, *the first/beginning of his way*, the beginning of his acts (Prov. 8.22), introducing the rather curious word 'way/path' into the description. A similar usage is found in Job 26.14 where Job describes the first processes of the creation – binding the waters, setting the boundary between light and darkness; these are but 'the outskirts of his ways'. It is not impossible that the word 'way' (which has both

senses of the English 'way', viz. path or manner) had another nuance in the Hebrew. Wisdom was, perhaps, brought forth as the first of the 'things brought forth', which could account for the curious line in the Qumran Wisdom text: 'Gaze on the mystery of existence and know the paths of everything that lives' (4Q417, see above). The equivalent in the *Ben Sira* is Wisdom's claim that she *came forth* from the mouth of the Most High (*Ben Sira* 24.30), and the Gnostic texts say that Barbelo was the first to come forth, the first *emanation*.

Both *Ben Sira* and the *Wisdom of Solomon* describe Wisdom in a manner reminiscent of Barbelo, although the fourfold nature is not mentioned. She is 'a breath of the power of God, a pure emanation of the Glory of the Almighty ... an image of his goodness' (*Wisd.* 7.25–26); she 'came forth from the mouth of the Most High' (*Ben Sira* 24.3). Barbelo 'came forth ... his image' (*Ap. Jo.*, CG II.1.5). 'Though she is but one she can do all things, and while remaining in herself she renews all things ...' (*Wisd.* 7.27); Barbelo said 'I dwell in those who came to be ... I move in everyone' (*First Thought* CG XIII.1.35). She is the fashioner of all things, and superior to any light; Barbelo is 'the Image of the Invisible Spirit though whom all took shape' (*First Thought* 38). She is 'radiant and unfading, she is easily discerned by those who love her, and is found by those who seek her' (*Wisd.* 6.12); Barbelo was 'the perfect glory in the aeons' (*Ap. Jo.*, CG II.1.5); 'You (fem.), have beheld that which is really first existent' (*Three Steles*, CG VII.5.121). She is 'an initiate in the knowledge of God, and an associate in his works' (*Wisd.* 8.4).

The unanswerable question has to be: can Barbelo's other characteristics be used to illuminate the obscure Hebrew of Ezekiel's vision? She was androgynous, she was the One in the midst of four, she was the womb of all living things, the mother of the aeons, endowed with the patterns and forms of those who truly exist. Who was the Living One(s), 'their whole body ... full of eyes round about' (Ezek. 10.12, AV)? This suggestion is consistent with the tradition that all the 'forms' of life were present in Day One, but it does raise the question of the date of these 'forms'. Ezekiel's vision is much earlier than Plato.

Perhaps the most striking and extraordinary link between the Living One with four faces/presences in Ezekiel's vision, the Barbelo figure whose name invites speculation as to her origin, and Wisdom as described in *Ben Sira* and the *Wisdom of Solomon*, is the traditional ikon of the Holy Wisdom. She is depicted beneath the firmament and so beneath the heavenly throne, just like Ezekiel's Living One, and she is encircled by a wheel within a wheel, not the moving parts of a chariot, but a huge circle of light stretching from earth to heaven, as in Ezekiel's vision. Perhaps this was what was meant by a wheel that did not turn. She is a royal figure, crowned and enthroned, a winged angel of fire who holds a serpent staff and a scroll. Ezekiel saw her leaving Jerusalem,

just before the city was destroyed. Enoch said Wisdom was abandoned just before Jerusalem was burned (*1 En.* 93.8).

There is also the widespread, but often unremarked, Christian symbol of One surrounded by Four. Sometimes it is five circles arranged like a cross and so taken as a cross. Sometimes it is a cross formed from five squares: one central and four as the arms of the cross. Sometimes it is a cross with four smaller crosses or other motifs in the quarters.[37] These one within four patterns can be found in illuminated texts, in jewels and especially on the stamps used to mark the eucharistic bread.

The Forms

The two visions of Ezekiel are the most detailed accounts of the throne and the heavenly beings in the Hebrew Scriptures. It must, therefore, be significant that a priest of the first temple constantly used the words *d'mut* and *mar'eh* in his descriptions. Most translations into English are not consistent in their usage, and so this important fact is obscured. The AV translates consistently and thus gives the most accurate impression of the Hebrew original: *d'mut* as 'likeness' and *mar'eh* as 'appearance'. The Good News Bible has confused and obscured these vital words. The NEB and RSV are inconsistent. Thus the RSV gives for the word *d'mut:* the *likeness* of the four (1.5); the *likeness* of their faces (1.10); it completely omits the *likeness* of the living creatures (1.13); the four had the same *likeness* (1.16); the *likeness* of a firmament (1.22); the *likeness* of a throne and the *likeness* of a man (1.26); the *form* that had the appearance of fire/a man (similar words in Hebrew, 8.2); in *form* resembling a throne (10.1); the four had the same *likeness* (10.10); the *semblance* of human hands (10.21); the *likeness* of their faces (10.22).

Elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures, the word *d'mut* can be used to compare a sound, so it is not necessarily visual: 'Hark a tumult on the mountains, *as* of a great multitude' (Isa. 13.4). It can indicate a simple comparison: '*Like* the venom of a serpent' (Ps. 58.4), or it can be an element in a builder's specification: King Ahaz sent Uriah the priest a *model* of the altar, and its pattern (2 Kgs 16.10). In Genesis, humans are created in the image, according to the *likeness* (Gen. 1.26), but the distinct male and female are the image but not the likeness (Gen. 1.27). Isaiah, in his polemic against idols, asked what could represent the *likeness* of God (Isa. 40.18). Then, using the verbal form of the same word: 'To whom do you *compare* me that I should be like him?' (Isa. 40.25; Isa. 46.5 is similar).

To translate *d'mut* by 'likeness' seems to obscure an important element of the meaning. 'Likeness' implies something concrete, whereas the noun *d'mut* and the related verb imply a thought or a concept preceding an action. Thus 'This man ... *planned* to destroy us'

(2 Sam. 21.5). 'As I *thought* to do to them' (Num. 33.56). 'They *meant* to kill me' (Jud. 20.5). 'He does not so *intend*' (Isa. 10.7a). 'As I have *planned*, so shall it be' (Isa. 14.24). The word *d'mut* seems to mean an idea or concept preceding its realization. Thus Isaiah was asking how anyone could represent the idea of God. King Ahaz sent an idea for an altar and a model. The separate male and female states are the image, the physical correspondence to God, but not the idea.

What, then, was Ezekiel describing? The heavenly vision comprised elements normally invisible which had become visible. With two exceptions, the word *d'mut* is accompanied by the word 'appearance'. There was a distinction between the invisible and what Ezekiel actually saw. (This pairing is easiest to see in the AV, which is consistent in its translating, using 'likeness' for *d'mut* and 'appearance' for *mar'eh*.)

The *d'mut* of the four living creatures and their appearance. (1.5)
The *d'mut* of the Living Ones and their appearance. (1.13)
One *d'mut* and four appearances of the wheels. (1.16)
The *d'mut* and appearance of the throne. (1.26; 10.1)
The *d'mut* and appearance of a man. (1.26)
The *d'mut* and appearance of the Glory. (1.28)
The *d'mut* and appearance of the man/fire. (8.2)
The *d'mut* and appearance of the faces. (10.22)

(There is the *d'mut* of the faces in 1.10, but no appearance, prompting the question: is 'face' the meaning here? Perhaps it should be presence, which would not have an 'appearance'. There is no 'appearance' of the firmament whose *d'mut* is mentioned in 1.22.)

It is possible that in Ezekiel's pairing of *d'mut* and *mar'eh*, 'idea' and 'visible form', we glimpse the world of the first temple priests. The state beyond the veil, the divine beings, the throne, the Glory, was invisible to the human eye, and so was described as *d'mut*; but when the prophet was granted a vision of these things, they took on an appearance, they became visible. The appearance was not the being itself; the elements of the heavenly world did not always appear and make themselves present in the same form. Thus Enoch on his first heavenly journey saw 'those who were like flaming fire, and when they wished they appeared as men' (*1 En.* 17.1). Uriel showed him the fallen angels 'and their spirits assuming many different forms are defiling mankind' (*1 En.* 19.1). The Spirit came upon Jesus in the bodily form of a dove (Luke 3.22). Paul knew that Satan could appear as an angel of light, but his essential being was not changed (2 Cor. 11.14). *This belief that heavenly realities could be made present in different ways is important for understanding the Eucharist.*[38]

Ezekiel's vision described an ascent; he saw first the Living One(s), then the 'wheels', then above them the throne and the man, the Glory. The vision was remembered in later tradition as the key to and sign of esoteric knowledge, in other words, the knowledge of Day One.

'Because of sin it is not permitted to man to know what is the *d'mut* on high. Were it not for sin, all the keys would be given to him and he would know how the heavens and the earth were created' (*Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* A 39).[39] To be granted this vision was a special privilege; the mysterious Prayer of David gives thanks for such a vision: 'You have caused me to see the vision of the Man on high [or perhaps 'the Man of eternity'], the LORD God [or O LORD God]' (1 Chron. 17.17; this is a literal rendering of the Hebrew, with 'vision' drawn from the LXX). Along with the vision of the Man, the seer learned about the creation, which in Ezekiel's case must have been the mysterious Living One(s).

The *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* offer fragmented glimpses of the holy of holies, as it was envisaged at the end of the second temple period. The problem with texts such as these is to know how to translate what are clearly technical terms. There are, for example, two words for 'form' in what follows, but there must have been some distinction between them. Those who 'serve the Presence in the *d'bir* of Glory', 'the Most Holy Ones ... the priests of the highest heights' (4Q400.1.1) are depicted in a setting very like Ezekiel's vision. There are *'elohim* like the appearance of coals, high places of knowledge, figures of flaming fire round about. There are the chiefs of the form (*tabnit*) of *'elohim* (4Q403.1.2). There are 'those who know the mysteries of ... (4Q405.3.2), there are 'living *'elohim*' (4Q405.6) and '[the *d'mut*] of living *'elohim* is engraved on the vestibules where the king enters ...' (4Q405.14–15), 'the appearance of flames of fire ... upon the *paroket* [veil of the holy of holies] of the *d'bir* of the king ...' (4Q405.15–16). A less fragmented text reads: '... spirits of the knowledge of truth [and] righteousness in the holy of holies, forms/shapes (*ṣurot*) of living *'elohim*, shapes (*ṣurot*) of luminous spirits, figures of shapes (*ṣurot*) of *'elohim* engraved [the verb *ḥqq*] round their glorious brickwork ... living *'elohim* ...' (4Q405.19). There is a new word here: *ṣurot*, often translated 'form' but distinguished from *d'mut*, clearly something engraved on a brick or tile. Other fragments describe the cherubim, and the sound as they raise their wings. They bless the form (*tabnit*) of the chariot throne which is above the firmament of the cherubim (4Q405.20–22). Elsewhere there are spirits of mingled colours engraved (with?) shapes of splendour, and 'the *d'mut* of a spirit of Glory like Ophir gold work shedding light ...' (4Q405.23).[40]

The 'engraving' of *ṣurot* suggests a link to other material which was also described as engraved. Ezekiel engraved the city of Jerusalem on a brick and then depicted the siege of the city (Ezek. 4.1). The LORD comforted Zion: 'I have *graven* you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me' (Isa. 49.16). Proverbs 8.27–29 described the engraving of the creation, *before* the mountains, the hills and the earth were made, when Wisdom was beside the Creator: 'When he prepared the heavens I was there, when he *engraved* a circle on

the face of the deep ... when he set down for the sea its *engraved mark* ... when he *engraved* the foundations of the earth ...'(rendering over-literally, to show the link between the words). This suggests that the 'engraving' of the creation preceded the making of the material world. This is consistent with another usage; that the eternal laws and ordinances, both for human society and for the natural world, were also described by a word derived from 'engraved'. In the regulations for priestly dues (e.g. Exod. 29.28), a 'perpetual due' is literally 'engraving of eternity'. In the rules for washing (Exod. 30.21), a statute for ever is 'an engraving of eternity'. Jeremiah knew an engraved creation: there were the limits for the sea (Jer. 5.22); 'a perpetual barrier' which the sea cannot pass is literally 'an engraving of eternity'. The stability of the creation was due to these engravings.: 'the fixed order [engravings] of the moon and the stars for light by night ... if these engraved things should depart from before my face, says the LORD ...' (Jer. 31.35–36). The times of a human life were also set in place: 'You have made his engraving and he cannot pass it' (Job 14.5, cf. 'He will complete my engraving', Job 23.14a). The whole creation was engraved before the creator. Thus Enoch saw the tablets of heaven, learned of even the remotest future, and then praised the Great LORD who had already created everything in the world (*1 En.* 81.1–3). The writings of the Gnostic teacher Theodotus, some of which were preserved by Clement of Alexandria, described the Son as 'drawn in outline in the Beginning' (*Excerpts* 19).

The belief in an engraved state was widespread. The following examples are drawn from texts separated by several centuries, but the common theme is there: 'Said R. Aha bar Isaac: When Solomon built the temple he drew pictures of all sorts of trees within it. When the equivalent trees outside produced fruit, those that were inside also produced fruit' (*j. Yoma* 4.4). According to *3 Enoch* (perhaps compiled in Babylon in the fifth century CE), the throne of Glory was engraved with sacred names which flew away to surround the Holy One and became the heavenly hosts (*3 En.* 39.1–2). In other words, the engraved state preceded the angelic state. The 70 names of Metatron 'which the Holy one, blessed be he, took from his sacred Name' had been engraved on the chariot throne (*3 En.* 48D5). In one of the Palestinian Targums, the angels were summoned to see Jacob sleeping at Bethel: 'Come see Jacob the pious whose image is on the throne of Glory' (*T. Ps Jon. Gen.* 28.12). The same motif appears in the great commentary on Genesis: Jacob's features were engraved 'on high' and the angels on the ladder saw the engraved Jacob above and the sleeping Jacob below (*Gen. R.* LXVIII.12). In medieval Jewish texts, the 'forms' (*ṣurot*) were thought to be divine powers or angels, and in early Kabbalistic writings, the 'forms' were deemed to be the source of the angelic realm.[41] These forms were also known as the 'measures'.[42]

The engravings on the throne of Glory also appear in the Egyptian Gnostic texts found at Nag Hammadi. A great throne on a four-faced chariot has 64 forms on it, and there are in addition Sabaoth and the seven who stand before him. These 64+7+1 make the 72 forms and 'from this chariot the 72 gods receive a pattern ... that they might rule over the 72 languages of the nations' (*On the Origin of the World*, CG II.5.105). These forms precede the gods who rule the nations, recognizable as the 70 sons of El whose mother had been the Great Lady, the Queen, whose image Ezekiel had seen in the temple (Ezek. 8.3). Another Nag Hammadi text described the process by which the 'form' comes into being. 'In the beginning he decided to have his form come to be as a great power. Immediately the beginning of the light was revealed as an immortal, androgynous man. His male name is the [begetting of the] Perfect One and his female name is All-wise begettress Wisdom. It is also said that she resembles her brother and her consort' (*Eugnostos*, CG. III.3.76–77). A different version of the titles is offered later: 'his masculine name is Saviour, Begetter of all things, his feminine name is called Wisdom, All Begettress. Some call her Faith.' An enigmatic passage in the Christianized version of the text may be describing the sequence of the creation:

> By that which was created, all that was made was revealed
> By that which was made that which was formed was revealed
> By that which was formed, that which was named
>
> (*The Wisdom of Jesus Christ*, CG. III.4.103)

The sequence seems to have been: named, formed, revealed, created. Ezekiel in his vision saw the form and its appearance, i.e. he saw the form and the revelation. The male/female divinity whose form became a great power 'in the beginning' was known as Saviour and Wisdom. Paul, without any explanation for the Church at Corinth, described Christ as the Power of God and the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1.24). The Gnostic texts, which at first sight seem rather strange, are in fact very close to the ancient temple tradition.

This way of understanding the creation, not as a process in past history but as a continuous, present reality, was known to the Kabbalists, who described four stages:

> The later Kabbalists spoke of four worlds which constitute such a spiritual hierarchy:
> The world of divine emanation (*'atsiluth*)
> The world of creation (*beri'ah)*
> The world of formation (*yetsirah*)
> The world of activation (*'asiyah*).
> These worlds are not successive but exist simultaneously and form the different stages by which the creative power of God materialises.[43]

We can only speculate as to what these ancient philosophers were trying to express, but the mystery whereby the invisible and unknowable God became known and visible in the creation was centred on and enacted in the holy of holies. This was the *raz nihyeh* of the Qumran Wisdom texts. These were the matters of the holy of holies, which the priests had to guard. These were the teachings which the Mishnah reserved only for the wise: 'The story of the creation may not be expounded before two persons, nor the chariot before one alone, unless he be a wise man who understands of his own knowledge. Whoever gives his mind to four things – what is above what is beneath, what is before time and what will be hereafter – ... it were better he had not come into the world' (*m. Ḥagigah* 2.1). The vocabulary by and large defeats us; there must have been a vital distinction between *dᵉmut* and *ṣurah/ṣurot*, and then there was *tabnit* (model?) and the various words for graven image. Pressed into the inconsistencies of English translations, the whole system is lost.

There was a state between the 'beyond' of God Most High and the visible, material world. In the beginning, before the dimensions of solidity in the material world, everything was deemed to exist in a flat state 'engraved'. Philo tried to explain this in his accounts of the creation and the tabernacle. Thus in his discourse about the number 4 he wrote:

> This number was the first to show the nature of the solid, the numbers before it referring to things without actual substance. For under the head of 1 what is called in geometry a point falls, under that of 2 a line ... and a line is length without breadth. If breadth is added, there results a surface, which comes under the category 3. To bring it to a solid surface needs one thing: depth – and the addition of this to 3 produces 4. The result of all this is that this number is a thing of vast importance. It was this number that has led us out of the realm of the incorporeal existence patent only to the intellect and has introduced us to the conception of a body of three dimensions which by its nature first comes within the range of our senses. (*On the Creation* 49)

Elsewhere he links the distinction between 3 and 4 to the veil of the holy of holies, in other words, to the boundary between the invisible and the visible creation: 'The incorporeal world is set off and separated from the visible one by the mediating Logos as by a veil. But may it not be that this Logos is the tetrad, through which the corporeal solid comes into being?' (*Questions on Exodus* 2.94). Philo was arguing that the state beyond the veil lacked the dimension of solidity; it was 'flat' in so far as it could be imagined at all, and what was in it was 'engraved'.[44]

Although *ṣurot*, plural, appears in later texts, a singular form of the word appears throughout the Hebrew Scriptures but is translated in the English versions as Rock, which is spelled the same way in Hebrew. In the vast majority of cases, the LXX has no word for Rock, implying that the translator saw something other than a Rock in the text. It is

likely that this was not a 'Rock' but a way of describing the invisible divine 'form', as can be seen by substituting in a few examples. Thus 'The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice' (Deut. 32.4); 'He forsook the God who made him, and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation' (Deut. 32.15); 'You were unmindful of the Rock that begot you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth' (Deut. 32.18, similarly 30–31). Something like 'Invisible One' would make as much sense as 'Rock'. Similarly 'the God of Israel has spoken to me, the Rock of Israel has said to me ...' (2 Sam. 23.3); or 'O LORD ... and thou, O Rock ...' (Hab. 1.12). In none of these examples is there anything to represent 'Rock' in the LXX. The LXX of Isaiah 30.29 actually translates 'to the Rock of Israel' by 'to the God of Israel'. The attack on idols and wooden images preceded by 'Is there a God *('eloah)* besides me? There is no Rock. I know no other' (Isa. 44.8). Again, there is no 'Rock' in the LXX, nor does 'Rock' appear in: Isa. 17.10; Isa. 26.4; Pss 19.14; 28.1; 73.26, where *ṣur* is 'strength' in English; 78.35; 89.26; 92.15; 95.1. There are a variety of words used instead, the most frequent being simply 'God'.

The context of these examples is probably significant: the Psalms are temple tradition, and with them may be included the last words of David, 2 Samuel 23. Isaiah is very much centred on Jerusalem, and Habakkuk has a temple setting. The origin of the Song of Moses (Deut. 32) is unknown. The subject matter of their broader context is also interesting: sonship/creation (Deut. 32.15,18; Ps. 89.26); Wisdom/discernment (Deut. 32.30–31; 2 Sam. 23.3); sanctuary visions (Hab. 1.12; Pss 73 and 89); knowledge of the future (Isa. 44.8; Ps. 73).

Jacob of Serug's *Homily on the Chariot that Ezekiel saw* shows that all these ideas were known to fifth century Christians. The human form on the throne was the Second God, and the throne itself was Mary his Virgin Mother (IV.590). The Father had drawn the image (*tsalma*) of his Son before the creation (i.e. in the holy of holies); he had 'delineated him beforehand', and Ezekiel had seen the likeness (*dmuta*) on the chariot (IV 591). This was linked to Jesus having the form of God and the likeness of men (Phil. 2.6–8). The liturgy of heaven, as revealed by the chariot throne, was shown to be the worship of the Church. The throne is the altar, and 'the liturgy of heaven and the (eucharistic) worship of the Church are therefore one and the same (IV 596). The Holy Spirit overshadows and dwells (*shkan*) within the bread and makes it the Body (IV 597). Ezekiel saw what Moses had seen on Sinai, (i.e. the vision of the whole creation) and he was commanded to replicate it in the tabernacle and its worship (599): 'All the mysteries that were hidden among the angels come to pass in the Church (IV 609, c.f. 1 Pet. 1.12).[45]

The Place of Light

The holy of holies, although in the temple a place of darkness, was symbolically the place of pre-created light; the mystics and visionaries described it as a place of fire. Enoch described a second house within the first house, whose floor and ceiling were flaming fire. In it was a crystal throne with wheels of fire, and from it flowed streams of fire. No angel could enter that place (*1 En.* 14.15-18). A similar experience is recorded in *1 Enoch* 71; Enoch saw a house surrounded by streams of fire with hosts of heavenly beings round about. The four archangels went into the house, wherein was enthroned the Head of Days. E. Isaac translates this name 'the Antecedent of Time' which fits better with the temple context of the vision, as the One beyond the veil was necessarily outside time. Even the fragments of the *Sabbath Songs* from Qumran are sufficient to show how the holy of holies and the throne were described in the end of the second temple period:

> From between his glorious wheels there is as it were a fiery vision of most holy spirits. Above them the appearance of rivulets of fire in the likeness of gleaming brass, ... radiance in many coloured glory ... In the midst of a glorious appearance of scarlet they hold to their holy station before the king, spirits of colour in the midst of an appearance of whiteness. (*Sabbath Songs* 4Q405)

The extracts from a second-century CE Gnostic teacher, preserved by Clement of Alexandria, have the same images of fire:

> A river goes from under the throne of Topos[46] and flows into the void of the creation which is Gehenna, and it is never filled, though the fire flows from the beginning of the creation. And Topos itself is fiery. Therefore (he says) it has a veil [*katapetasma*, the technical term for the veil of the holy of holies], in order that things may not be destroyed by the sight of it. And only the archangel enters it, and to typify this, the high priest every year enters the holy of holies. From thence Jesus was called and sat down with Topos. (*Excerpts from Theodotus* 38)

Origen, writing early in the third century CE, explained that the baptism of fire was when Jesus, standing in the river of fire before the throne, would baptize his followers into the divine presence (*On Luke*, Homily 24). Centuries before this, though, Daniel had seen his night vision of the Man figure going with clouds to the Ancient of Days, who was seated on a fiery throne above a stream of fire (Dan. 7.9–14), and earlier still, Isaiah had asked: 'Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire, who among us can dwell with the everlasting burnings? ... Your eyes will see the King in his beauty' (Isa. 33.14,17). The holy of holies had been a place of fire in the time of the first temple, and the later texts confirm that the ancient imagery was widely known and accurately used well into the Christian era.

The divine presence was also described as light, and the coming of the presence into the temple was described as the coming of light. Thus

in the Psalms we read: 'Let thy face/presence shine on thy servant' (Ps. 31.16); 'Out of Zion ... God shines forth' (Ps. 50.2); 'May God ... make his face/presence shine upon us' (Ps. 67.1); 'Let your face/presence shine and we shall be saved' (Ps. 80.3). The blessing to be given by the sons of Aaron was: 'May the LORD bless you and keep you, May the LORD make his face/presence to shine on you and be gracious unto you, May the LORD lift up his face/presence upon you and give you peace' (Num. 6. 24–6). The familiarity of these words should not obscure the fact that they are very strange. What does lifting up a face on someone actually mean?[47] Isaiah described a great light in the darkness (Isa. 9.2) and one of his later disciples proclaimed that the Glory of the LORD had risen on his city (Isa. 60.1–2). The LORD was clothed in light like a garment (Ps. 104.2) but Habakkuk knew that it was too bright for human eyes: 'His brightness was like the light, rays flashed from his hand, and there he veiled his power' (Hab. 3.4). Moses asked to see the Glory but the LORD warned him that nobody could see the face/presence and live (Exod. 33.20). In contrast, we read in the New Testament: 'We have beheld his glory' (John 1.14), a reference to John's experience of the Transfiguration, when the light of Day One was visible to three of the disciples (Mark 9.1–8). Jesus also spoke of this pre-created light and he knew that he was about to return there: 'And now Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory I had with thee before the world was made' (John 17.5).

This light imagery is found throughout the New Testament: 'God is light and in him is no darkness at all' (1 John 1.5); 'The King of Kings and LORD of LORDs who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see' (1 Tim. 6.16). Christians are 'the children of light' (Eph. 5.8), so called because they are resurrected (Eph. 5.14). This is temple imagery, because the holy of holies was the place of eternal life, and those who passed into it were transformed into the life of eternity. They were also 'called out of darkness into his marvellous light' (1 Pet. 2.9), more temple imagery, for those called into the light are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation'. In the Book of Revelation, the heavenly city, which is a huge cube, and so the holy of holies (Rev. 21.27), is a place which does not need the light of sun or moon, 'for the glory of God is its light and its lamp is the Lamb' (Rev. 21.23). The great light, which was also Life, had come into the world with the Incarnation: 'In him was Life and the Life was the Light of Men' (John 1.4); 'The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world' (John 1.9). Jesus said: 'I am the Light of the world' (John 8.12).

The Qumran texts are full of allusions to this place of light. The community called themselves 'sons of light' and they were ruled by 'the Prince of light' (1QS III). Their hymns sing of one who would 'shine in sevenfold light' (*Hymn* XV, formerly designated *Hymn* VII), who

would 'stand in the everlasting abode, illumined with perfect light for ever' (*Hymn* XXI, formerly XVIII). The LORD revealed himself as 'perfect light' (*Hymn* XII, formerly IV). One of the sayings of Jesus in the *Gospel of Thomas* is very similar, advice for his followers on their journey to heaven: 'If they [perhaps the angels who guarded the way back into Paradise (Gen. 3.24)] say to you "Where did you come from?" say to them "We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord."' (*Thomas* 50). The Gnostic writings, too, described the place of light where all things began. *The Wisdom of Jesus Christ*, a damaged text found at Nag Hammadi, shows how this place of light was described by early followers of Jesus who were, with the wisdom of hindsight, described as Gnostics.

> The First begetter Father is called Adam [ ] eye of the light because he came from the shining light [ ] his holy angels who are ineffable [ ] shadowless ... [ ] the whole kingdom of the Son of Man, the one who is called Son of God. It is full of ineffable and shadowless joy and unchanging jubilation because they rejoice over his imperishable glory. (CG III.4.105)

In order to understand the later interpretations of the creation story and especially of Day One and the holy of holies, it is necessary to go beneath the surface of the Hebrew Scriptures and to reconstruct the older temple tradition. Only then is it possible to see how much of what is identified as Platonism in late second temple and early Christian texts could easily have been a recollection of what lay beneath the biblical text, namely the traditions of the ancient priesthood.

8

BEYOND THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE: THE HIGH PRIESTLY ORIGIN OF THE APOCALYPSES[1]

The veil of the temple was woven from blue, purple, crimson and white thread, and embroidered with cherubim (2 Chron. 3.14); the veil in the tabernacle had been similar (Exod. 26.31; 36.35).[2] It was a valuable piece of fabric, and both Antiochus and Titus took a veil when they looted the temple (1 Macc. 1.21–22; Josephus, *War* 7.162). In the second temple it was some 200 square metres of fabric and when it contracted uncleanness and had to be washed, 300 priests were needed for the job (*m. Shekalim* 8.4–5). Josephus says it was a Babylonian tapestry (*War* 5.212), a curtain embroidered with a panorama of the heavens (*War* 5.213). The veil separated the holy place from the most holy (Exod. 26.33), screening from view the ark and the cherubim or, in the temple, the ark and the chariot throne.[3] We are told that only the high priest entered the holy of holies, once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Josephus, who was himself a priest (*Life* 1), says that the tabernacle was a microcosm of the creation, divided into three parts: the outer parts represented the sea and the land but 'the third part thereof ... to which the priests were not admitted, is, as it were, a heaven peculiar to God' (*Ant.* 3.181). *Thus the veil which screened the holy of holies was also the boundary between earth and heaven.* Josephus was writing at the very end of the second temple period, but texts such as Psalm 11, 'The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven', suggest that the holy of holies was thought to be heaven at a much earlier period, and the LXX of Isaiah 6, which differs from the Hebrew, implies that the *hekhal* was the earth.[4] The Glory of the LORD filled the house in v. 1, and the seraphim sang that the Glory filled the earth, v. 3.

The biblical description of the holy of holies in the first temple is that it was overlaid with fine gold (2 Chron. 3.8) and that it housed 'the golden chariot of the cherubim that spread their wings and covered the ark of the covenant' (1 Chron. 28.18). Later texts say that Aaron's rod and a pot of manna were kept in the ark, and that the anointing oil was also kept in the holy of holies (*Tosefta Kippurim* 2.15). That is what the writers of the second temple period chose to remember, as there were none of these things in the temple of their own time; they had all been hidden away in *the time of Josiah* (*b. Horayoth* 12ab; *b. Keritoth* 5b).

In the visionary texts, however, the holy of holies is vividly described, suggesting not only that the visionaries knew the holy of holies, but also that they had a particular interest in it. Isaiah saw the throne in the tem le with heavenly bein s beside it; Enoch entered a

second house within the first house, a place of fire where there was a lofty throne surrounded by the hosts of heaven (*1 En.* 14). The undateable *Parables* of Enoch have the same setting: the throne of glory and the hosts of heaven. These images were memories of the cult of the first temple, and it was the visionaries who kept the memory alive: Enoch in the *Book of Jubilees* is depicted as a priest, burning the incense of the sanctuary (*Jub.* 4.25) and Ezekiel, who saw the chariot, was also a priest (Ezek. 1.3).

Those who entered the holy of holies were entering heaven. When Solomon n became king, the Chronicler recorded that he sat on the throne of the LORD and all the assembly bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD and king (1 Chron. 29.20–23). Something similar was said of Moses in later texts when much of the old royal ideology was transferred to him: Ezekiel the tragedian described how a heavenly figure on the summit of Sinai stood up from his throne and gave it to Moses (Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* 9.29); Philo said that Moses 'entered into the darkness where God was and was named God and King of the whole nation' (*Moses* 1.158). For both Ezekiel and Philo, this transformation took place on Sinai, one of the many examples of Moses sharing the royal traditions associated with the holy of holies, but there can be no question of this being Hellenistic syncretism as is usually suggested.[5] *Acquiring the titles and status of God and King must be related in some way to the Chronicler's description of Solomon's coronation,* and to the ıe psalmist's description of the procession into the sanctuary, when he saw his God and his King (Ps. 68.24).

Other texts imply that a transformation took place in the holy of holies: those who entered heaven became divine. Philo said that when the high priest entered the holy of holies *he was not a man.* We read Leviticus 16.17 as: 'there shall be no man in the holy of holies when he [Aaron] enters to make atonement ...' but Philo translated it: 'When the high priest enters the Holy of Holies he shall not be a man', showing, he said, that the high priest was more than human (*On Dreams* 2.189). In *2 Enoch* there is an account of how Enoch was taken to stand before the heavenly throne. Michael was told to remove his earthly clothing, anoint him and give him the garments of glory; 'I looked at myself, and I had become like one of his glorious ones' (*2 En.* 22.10). This bears a strong resemblance to Zechariah 3, where Joshua the high priest stands before the LORD, is vested with new garments and given the right to stand in the presence of the LORD. As late as the sixth century Cosmas Indicopleustes, an Egyptian Christian, wrote a great deal about the temple and its symbolism, and we shall have cause to consider his evidence at several points. Of Moses he said: the LORD hid him in a cloud on Sinai, took him out of all earthly things 'and begot him anew like a child in the womb' (Cosmas, *Christian Topography* 3.13), clearly the same as Psalm 2: 'I have set my king on Zion ... You

are my son. Today I have begotten you', but using the imagery of reclothing with heavenly garments, rather than rebirth.

The best known example of such a transformation text is in the Book of Revelation. The vision begins in the *hekhal* where John sees the heavenly figure and the seven lamps, originally the menorah. Then he is invited to enter the holy of holies; a voice says: 'Come up hither and I will show you what must take place after this' (Rev. 4.1). He sees the throne and the Lamb approaching the throne. Once the Lamb has taken the scroll *he is worshipped by the elders in the sanctuary and then becomes identified with the One on the throne.* Throughout the remainder of the book, the One on the throne and the Lamb are treated as one, with singular verbs. The Lamb has become divine.[6]

The veil was the boundary between earth and heaven. Josephus and Philo agree that the four different colours from which it was woven represented the four elements from which the world was created: earth, air, fire and water. The scarlet thread represented fire, the blue was the air, the purple was the sea, i.e. water, and the white linen represented the earth in which the flax had grown (*War* 5.212–13). In other words, *the veil represented matter.* The high priest wore a vestment woven from the same four colours, and this is why the *Book of Wisdom* says that Aaron's robe represented the whole world (*Wisd.* 18.24; also Philo, *Laws* 1.84; *Flight* 110). He took off this robe when he entered the holy of holies because the robe was the visible form of one who entered the holy of holies. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, which explores the theme of Jesus as the high priest, there is the otherwise enigmatic line: his flesh was the veil of the temple (Heb. 10.20). In other words, the veil was matter which made visible whatever passed through it from the world beyond the veil. Those who shed the earthly garments, on the other side of the veil, were robed in garments of glory. In other words, they became divine.

The age of these ideas of apotheosis beyond the veil of the temple or on Sinai is a matter of some importance for understanding the religion of Israel and the origin of Christianity. They are unlikely to be simply the result of Hellenistic syncretism because whoever wrote Exodus 34.29 knew that when Moses came down from Sinai his face was shining. He had become one of the glorious ones, because he had been with God and his face had to be covered by a veil.[7]

When Philo described the apotheosis of Moses on Sinai he said that he entered the darkness where God was; 'the unseen, invisible, incorporeal, and archetypal essence of all existing things and he beheld what is hidden from the sight of mortal nature' (*Moses* 1.158). This is what the Qumran texts describe as the *raz nihyeh* (4Q300, 417), what 1 Peter describes as 'the things into which angels long to look' (1 Pet. 1.12). Elsewhere Philo explained that this invisible world was made on the first day of the creation:

> ... a beautiful copy would never be produced apart from a beautiful pattern ... so when God willed to create this visible world he first fully formed the intelligible [i.e. invisible] world in order that he might have the use of a pattern wholly God-like and incorporeal in producing the material world as a later creation, the very image of the earlier. (*Creation* 16)

This description of the two creations, the invisible creation which was the pattern for the visible, is usually said to be Philo retelling the Genesis account in terms derived from Plato, but this I doubt. Philo was from a priestly family,[8] and it is not impossible that he was giving the traditional explanation of the creation stories which owed nothing to Plato.

When familiar texts and habits of reading are questioned, interesting possibilities present themselves. What, for example, were the *forms (ṣurot)* of the *'elohim* and the *forms of glory* in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q405 19)? M. Idel has suggested that these *forms of glory* are evidence for reconstructing the oldest Jewish mystical traditions,[9] that these forms in the sanctuary were a part of the priestly world view. Perhaps they occur also in Psalm 85, where Righteousness looks down from heaven, and in Psalm 89 where Righteousness, Justice, Steadfast Love and Faithfulness are the LORD's attendants. Is the language of personification any longer appropriate?

There are also the many occasions when the divine title *ṣur* might not mean Rock but some word indicating the heavenly form. In Isaiah 44.8 for example, where 'Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock', is followed immediately by an attack on idols and images. The reference here is more likely to be to *the form* and its copy, than to a Rock and then an idol. More or less contemporary with this is Deuteronomy's emphatic denial that any form of the LORD, *t'munah*, was seen at Horeb: 'You heard the sound of words but saw no form' (Deut. 4.12), an indication of how this understanding of form might have been lost. Other examples of *ṣur* are: Deut. 32.4, 15, 18, 31 where the context is fatherhood, 'the rock that begot you' or comparison with other gods, 'they scoffed at the Rock ... and stirred him to jealousy with strange gods'; Ps. 73.26, where the context is a sanctuary vision of judgement on the wicked, and the psalmist expresses confidence in the Rock in heaven; also Pss 28.1; 89.26; 95.1 and Hab. 1.12, in none of which is 'rock' represented in the LXX.

There are also the expressions characteristic of the visionary texts: what did Ezekiel mean when he said he had seen the likeness, *d'mut*, of the living creatures, the 'likeness' of the throne, the 'likeness' of a man? Or the Chronicler when he wrote of the plan, *tabnit*, for the temple which was revealed to David (1 Chron. 28.19). A plan, *tabnit*, for the tabernacle was revealed to Moses on Sinai (Exod. 25.9,40), and the LORD comforted Zion by reminding her that the city was engraved on his hands, its walls were ever before him (Isa. 49.16).

And what is meant by *mashal*? It can be understood as a parable or as a proverb. The 'Parables' of Enoch, however, are visions. When he sees the stars and their movements and then asks the angel: 'What are these?' the angel replies: 'The LORD has shown you their parable, they are the holy who dwell on the earth' (*1 En.* 43.4). He is taught about the correspondence between earth and heaven. Job 38.33 has a similar meaning. Jesus' parables give the other side of the picture; he teaches what the Kingdom of heaven *is like* by using everyday stories and images.

These are all facets of the forms and their copies: the language of the visionaries, the undoubtedly ancient belief in a heavenly archetype of the temple, and the parable/proverb. In another context, for example the writings of Philo, this would be identified with some confidence as the influence of Plato's forms and their copies, but the age of the material in the Old Testament excludes that possibility. Since Philo was of a priestly family, perhaps his treatment of the creation stories, the creation of the invisible world beyond the veil of the temple and then the visible world as its copy, is not an example of the Platonizing of Hellenistic Judaism but rather a glimpse of the ancient priestly world view even at the end of the second temple period.

The holy of holies was also beyond time. To enter was to enter eternity. Philo says that the veil 'separated the changeable parts of the world ... from the heavenly region which is without transient events and is unchanging' (*Questions on Exodus* 2.91). The best known example of a timeless experience is the vision of Jesus in the wilderness when he was taken to a high place and saw 'all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time' (Luke 4.5). In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the patriarch was taken up to heaven where he saw the stars far below him (*Ap. Abr.* 20.3). The Eternal One then said to him: 'Look now beneath your feet at the firmament and understand the creation that was depicted of old on this expanse ...' (*Ap. Abr.* 21.1). Abraham sees the firmament as a screen on which the history of his people is revealed to him. The detail which links this experience of the firmament to the holy of holies is to be found in *3 Enoch*, an undateable text which describes how R. Ishmael the high priest ascended to heaven. Now Rabbi Ishmael lived after the temple had been destroyed and cannot have been a high priest, and the versions of *3 Enoch* which we have were compiled long after that. Nevertheless, the association of ascent, high priesthood and the sanctuary experience persisted, and thus we find here in *3 Enoch* the explanation of the vision described in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. The firmament on which Abraham saw the history of his people was the veil.

In *3 Enoch*, R. Ishmael ascended to heaven and met Metatron, the great angel who in his earthly life had been Enoch, and who became his guide:

Metatron said to me: Come, I will show you the veil of the All Present One, which is spread before the Holy One, blessed be He, and on which are printed all the generations of the world and all their deeds, whether done or yet to be done, until the last generation. I went with him and he pointed them out to me with his fingers, like a father teaching his son. (*3 En.* 45) [10]

The visionary saw history depicted on the veil, on the other side, so to speak, of matter and time. This probably explains the experience of Habakkuk, centuries earlier, who stood on the tower, a common designation for the holy of holies,[11] and saw there 'a vision of the future, it awaits its time, it hastens to the end ... it will surely come, it will not delay' (Hab. 2.2–3). He recorded what he saw on tablets.

Enoch has the fullest account of history seen in the holy of holies. Three angels who had emerged from heaven took Enoch up to a *tower* raised high above the earth, and there he saw all history revealed before him, from the fall of the angels to the last judgement (*1 En.* 87.3). When history was revealed to Moses, however, it was on Sinai, according to the account in *Jubilees*. He was told: 'Write down for yourself all the matters which I shall make known to you to on this mountain: what was in the beginning and what will be at the end and what will happen in all the divisions of the days ... until I shall descend and dwell with them in all the ages of eternity' (*Jub.* 1.26). According to this account, Moses did not see a vision; the story was dictated to him by the Angel of the Presence, and he learned of history only up to his own time. *2 Baruch*, on the other hand, says that Moses on Sinai received a vision rather than instruction, and that it included knowledge about the future. He showed him: 'the end of time ... the beginning of the day of judgement ... worlds that have not yet come' (*2 Bar.* 59.4–10, cf. *2 Esdr.* 14.5). Something similar was said of Jesus by the early Christian writers Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria and Origen: that he was the high priest who had passed through the curtain and revealed the secrets of the past, the present and the future.[12]

History seen in the sanctuary, whether this was described as a tower or as Sinai, was history seen outside the limitations of space and time *and this explains why histories in the apocalyptic writings are surveys not only of the past but also of the future as everything was depicted on the veil.*

Those who passed through the veil also *passed into the first day of creation* as the building of the tabernacle was said to correspond to the days of creation. Again, the evidence for this belief is relatively late, but given the cultural context of the first temple, it is not unlikely. Solomon's kingdom was surrounded by cultures which linked the story of creation to the erection of temples,[13] and there are canonical texts which could be explained in this way. Various attempts have been made to relate the commands given to Moses and the account of the seven days in Genesis 1. One was that the gathering of the waters on the third

day corresponded to making the bronze sea, and making the great lights on the fourth day corresponded to making the menorah. The birds of the fifth day corresponded to the cherubim with their wings and the man on the sixth day was the high priest.[14] It is more satisfactory to keep the traditional order for creating the tabernacle: tent, veil, table, lamp, and link this to the first four days of creation. The earth and seeds of the third day would then be represented by the table where bread was offered and the great lights of the fourth day by the menorah.[15]

There is no disagreement, however, over the correspondence between the first and second days of creation and the first two stages of making the tabernacle. The LORD told Moses to begin erecting the tabernacle on the first day of the first month (Exod. 40.2). In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and on the first day Moses set up the outer covering, the basic structure of the tabernacle (Exod. 40.17–19). On the second day, God made the firmament and called it heaven and on the second day Moses set up the veil and screened the ark (Exod. 40.20–21). This implies that those who passed beyond the veil and entered the sanctuary entered the first day of creation, a curious idea, but one for which there is much evidence, and one that explains how the firmament separating heaven and earth was also the temple veil on which history was depicted in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: 'Look now beneath your feet at the firmament and understand the creation ... and the creatures that are in it and the age prepared after it ...' (*Ap. Abr.* 21.1–2).

The tabernacle and all its furnishings were also believed to be a copy of what Moses had seen on Sinai: 'See that you make them after the pattern which is being shown you on the mountain' (Exod. 25.9,40). The Chronicler said that the temple was built according to a heavenly revelation received by David (1 Chron. 28.19), another example of the similarity between Moses traditions and those of the royal cult. The verses in Exodus do not actually say that Moses saw *a heavenly tabernacle* that was to be the pattern, *tabnit*, for the tabernacle he had to build, but some later texts do assume this. Solomon in the *Book of Wisdom* says he was commanded to build a temple, 'a copy of the holy tent which was prepared from the beginning' (*Wisd.* 9.8), and *2 Baruch* lists what Moses saw on Sinai and includes the pattern of Zion and the sanctuary (*2 Bar.* 59.4). Given the importance of the subject matter, there are surprisingly few references to the heavenly sanctuary that Moses saw on Sinai.[16]

The other two aspects of the tradition, that the temple was a microcosm of the creation and that its construction corresponded to the days of creation suggest that what Moses saw on Sinai was not a heavenly tabernacle but rather, *a vision of the creation which the tabernacle was to replicate.* This would account for Philo's observation that the tabernacle 'was a copy of the world, the universal temple which existed before the holy temple existed' (*Questions on Exodus* 2.85), and for the curious line in the Letter to the Hebrews that the temple on earth 'is a

shadow and copy of heavenly things' (Heb. 8.5). A heavenly temple is not mentioned in this verse even though some translations insert the word *temple* at this point, e.g. RSV.[17]

The idea that Moses on Sinai had a vision of the creation finds its clearest expression in the writings of Cosmas, the sixth-century Egyptian Christian. He explained that the earth was rectangular and constructed like a huge tent because Moses had been commanded to build the tabernacle as a copy of the whole creation, which he had been shown on Sinai. This is what he wrote:

> When Moses had come down from the mountain he was ordered by God to make the tabernacle, which was a representation of what he had seen on the mountain, namely, an impress of the whole world.

The creation Moses had seen was divided into two parts:

> Since therefore it had been shown him how God made the heaven and the earth, and how on the second day he made the firmament in the middle between them, and thus made the one place into two places, so Moses, in like manner, in accordance with the pattern which he had seen, made the tabernacle and placed the veil in the middle and by this division made the one tabernacle into two, the inner and the outer. (*Cosmas* 2.35)

The *Book of Jubilees* has a similar tradition; that Moses on Sinai learned about the creation from the Angel of the Presence. *Jubilees* does not link Moses' vision to the tabernacle and so cannot have been Cosmas' only source, even supposing that he knew it at all.[18] The sequence in *Jubilees* is the same as in Genesis 1, except that *Jubilees* gives far more detail about Day One, the secrets of the holy of holies. There are seven works on Day One: heaven, earth, the waters, the abyss, darkness and light – all of which can be deduced from Genesis – and then the ministering angels, who are not mentioned in Genesis.[19] These angels of Day One are the spirits of the weather: wind, clouds, snow, hail, frost, thunder and lightning, cold and heat; they are the spirits of the seasons and also 'all of the spirits of his creatures which are in heaven and on earth' (*Jub.* 2.2). The angels who witness these works of the first day 'praise and bless the LORD'.[20] A similar account occurs in the Song of the Three Children; before inviting the earth and everything created after the second day to *praise the LORD and exalt him for ever,* there is a long list of the works of Day One: the heavens, the angels, the waters above the heavens, the powers, the stars, the rain, dew, winds, fire, heat, summer and winter, ice and cold, frost and snow, lightnings and clouds, *the phenomena whose angels praise the LORD on Day One according to* Jubilees. The angels of Day One were a sensitive issue. Later Jewish tradition gave the seven works of Day One as heaven and earth, darkness and light, waters and the abyss, and then the winds, whereas *Jubilees* has the angels.

It has long been accepted[21] that Genesis 1 is a reworking of older

material and is related to other accounts of creation known in the Ancient Near East. One of the main elements to have been removed is any account of the birth of the gods, even though Genesis 2.1–4 retains traces of the older account: 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them ... These are the generations of the heavens and the earth.' In Job 38.7,[22] however, we still read of the sons of God who shouted for joy on the first day of creation when the foundations of the earth were laid, and *sons of God* implies that they were begotten, not created. The rest of Job 38 describes the works of Day One: the boundary for the waters, the gates of deep darkness, the storehouses of snow and hail, wind, rain and ice, the pattern of the stars. And the point of all this is to ask Job: 'Where were you when all this was done?', a strange question for the LORD to ask Job unless there was a known tradition of someone who witnessed the work of creation and thus became wise.[23] There is a similar pattern in Job 26: wisdom and knowledge are part of the issue, and Job speaks of God stretching out the north over the void, *tohu*, binding up the waters, rebuking the pillars of heaven and 'covering his throne', v. 9, usually emended to 'covering the moon'.[24] 'Covering the throne' is not usually associated with the process of creation, unless the reference is to the veil which screened the sanctuary and did in fact cover the throne. Wisdom, as the serpent in Eden had said, made humans divine, exactly what happened to those who entered the sanctuary and, by implication, witnessed the creation.

Enoch, the high priest figure who entered the holy of holies, did know about these things; in *2 Enoch* he is taken to stand before the throne in heaven, anointed and transformed into an angel. Then he is shown the great secrets of the creation. The account is confused, but closely related to the account in Genesis even though some of the details seem to be drawn from Egyptian mythology. Enoch is enthroned next to Gabriel and shown how the LORD created the world, beginning with heaven, earth and sea, the movement of the stars, the seasons, the winds and the angels (*2 En.* 23). He sees Day One. *Enthronement* is an important and recurring feature of these texts and another indication of their origin.[25] It is significant that the sanctuary hymn in Revelation 4.11 is about enthronement and creation:

> Worthy art thou our LORD and God
> to receive glory and honour and power,
> for thou didst create all things
> and by thy will they existed and were created.

In the *Parables*, Enoch stands in the holy of holies before the throne and learns about the hidden things, 'the secrets of the heavens' (*1 En.* 41.1), the works of Day One: the holy ones, the lightning and thunder, the winds, clouds and dew, '*the cloud that hovers over the earth from the beginning of the world*', the various stars in their orbits with their names.

Josephus says that the Essenes undertook *to preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels* (*War* 2.142).[26]

The fullest account of this material is in *1 Enoch* 69 where the angel shows Enoch the hidden things: 'What is first and last in heaven in the height, and beneath the earth in the depth, and at the ends of the heaven and at the foundation of the heaven.' He then sees the winds, the moon and stars, thunders and lightnings, the angels of hail and frost, dew, mist and clouds. Later he sees the great oath which establishes the creation and binds all its elements into their appointed places (*1 En.* 69.16–25). The very earliest Enoch material describes how he sees the works of Day One; on his first heavenly journey, Enoch learns about the stars, thunder and lightning, the place of great darkness, the mouth of the deep, the winds, the cornerstone of the earth and the firmament of heaven, the paths of the angels and the firmament of heaven at the end of the earth (*1 En.* 18). In the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, another early text embedded in *1 Enoch*, there is an expansion after the description of the seventh week. At the end of the seventh week, the chosen righteous ones were to receive sevenfold, i.e. *heavenly* knowledge about all the creation: they would behold the works of heaven, understand the things of heaven, ascend to see the end of the heaven and know the length and breadth of the earth and its measurements, they would know the length and height of heaven, its foundations, the stars and where they rest (*1 En.* 93.11–14). It is interesting that R. H. Charles in his edition of *1 Enoch* says that these verses are 'completely out of place in their present context'.[27]

What Job had not seen, Enoch saw in the holy of holies. There is not just one isolated example of such a vision of creation; it is a recurring theme throughout the entire compendium of texts. And what Enoch saw in the holy of holies, Moses, as we should expect, has seen on Sinai. According to *2 Baruch*, Moses saw:

> the measures of fire, the depths of the abyss, the weight of the winds, the number of the raindrops, ... the height of the air, the greatness of Paradise, ... the mouth of hell ... the multitude of angels which cannot be counted ... the splendour of lightnings, the power of the thunders, the orders of the archangels and the treasuries of the light ... (*2 Bar.* 59.4–12)[28]

When Ezra asks about the LORD's future plans for his people, he is assured that the One who planned all things would also see them to their end. Everything had been decided 'before the winds blew and the thunder sounded and the lightning shone, before the foundations of paradise were laid and the angels were gathered together, before the heights of the air were lifted up and the measures of the firmaments were named, before the present years were reckoned' (*2 Esdr.* 6.1-6). Ezra is told that *everything was planned in the holy of holies, before time.*

The speaker in Proverbs 8 also saw the works of Day One. The speaker was begotten[29] before the mountains, the hills and the earth, and was with the Creator when he established the heavens and the fountains of the deep and when he set limits to the waters and marked out the foundations of the earth. *This chapter emphasizes that the speaker was witness to the works of Day One.* The one who was newly born witnessed the creation, exactly what Cosmas, many centuries later, said of Moses.

> Then having taken him up into the mountain, he hid him in a cloud and took him out of all earthly things ... and he gave him a new birth as if he were a child in the womb ... and revealed to him all that he had done in making the world in six days, showing him in six other days the making of the world, performing in his presence the work of each day ... (*Cosmas* 3.13)[30]

Later mystics describe a similar experience. Jacob Boehme, for example, a seventeenth-century German mystic, described a similar experience of learning everything in an instant, and of being a child:

> Thus now I have written, not from the instruction of knowledge received from men, nor from the learning or reading of books, but I have written out of my own book which was opened in me, being the noble similitude of God, the book of the noble and precious image was bestowed on me to read, and therein I have studied as a child in the house of its mother, which beholdeth what the father doth and in his childlike way doth imitate the father.
>
> ...the gate was opened to me in that one quarter of an hour. I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at university ... and I knew not how it happened to me ... for I saw and knew the Being of all Beings ... the descent and original of this world and of all creatures through divine wisdom ...[31]

Philo describes the works of Day One as the invisible and incorporeal world. 'First the maker made an incorporeal heaven and an invisible earth and the essential form of air and void' (*Creation* 29). That was Day One in Genesis. After a lengthy discussion, Philo describes the second day: 'The incorporeal cosmos was finished ... and the world apprehended by the senses was ready to be born after the pattern of the incorporeal. And first of its parts the Creator proceeded to make the heaven which ... he called the firmament' (*Creation* 36). In other words, everything made on or after the second day was part of the visible world but the works of Day One were beyond matter, beyond the veil. Elsewhere, Philo confirms this by saying that Moses entered this 'unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of existing things and saw what was hidden from mortal sight' when he entered God's presence to be made God and King (*Moses* 1.158). On the third day, says Philo, the creator began 'to put the earth in order' (*Creation* 40).

Beyond the veil of the temple was the holy of holies with the heavenly throne, the invisible world and Day One of creation. The LXX translator of Genesis knew this and so chose to render the enigmatic *tohu wabohu* (Gen. 1.2) by 'unseen' and 'unsorted', reminiscent of Plato's description of the unseen world of ideas, and this has been suggested as a possible influence on the translators.[32] But Plato's account of creation, especially in the *Timaeus*, is itself of uncertain origin, and the question of who influenced whom must remain open.[33]

Knowledge of these secrets gave power over the creation, and this is probably why there are several texts which forbid access to certain matters. There is a line in the *Gospel of Philip* (CG II.3.84), now thought to be a first- or second-generation Christian text: 'The veil at first concealed how God controlled the creation.' In the *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* we find (A39): 'Because of sin it was not given to man to know the likeness (*dᵉmut*) on high; for were it not for this [sin] all the keys would be given to him and he would know how the heavens and the earth were created ...'[34]

Best known must be the prohibitions in the Mishnah restricting the reading of both the story of creation and Ezekiel's description of the chariot, on the grounds that one should not think about 'what is above, what is below, what was before time and what will be hereafter' (*m. Hag.* 2.1).[35] What the Creation and the Chariot have in common is that they both belong to the world beyond the veil, the timeless place which also revealed the past and the future. Some centuries earlier than the Mishnah is the warning in *Ben Sira*: 'Seek not what is too difficult for you, nor investigate what is beyond your power. Reflect upon what has been assigned to you, for you do not need what is hidden' (*Ben Sira* 3.21–22). We are not told what the hidden things were. Earlier still, and most significant of all, is the prohibition in Deuteronomy: 'The secret things belong to the LORD our God: but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children' (Deut. 29.29). Secrets are said to exist.[36] It is interesting that such knowledge is still forbidden; the Pope, addressing a group of cosmologists in Rome in 1981, reminded them that science itself could not answer the question of the origin of the universe.[37]

Proverbs 30 must refer to the world beyond the veil of the temple; it links sonship, ascent to heaven, knowledge of the Holy Ones and the works of Day One:

> Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
> Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
> Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
> Who has established all the ends of the earth? (Prov. 30.4)[38]

To which Deuteronomy replies: '[This commandment] is not in

heaven, that you should say: Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' (Deut. 30.11). Job's arguments were shown to be 'words without knowledge' (Job 38.2) because he had not witnessed the works of Day One.

Most of the detailed evidence for this tradition of the world beyond the veil has been drawn from relatively late texts, but the warnings against secret knowledge suggest that it was a matter of controversy from the beginning of the second temple period. No one text from the later period gives a complete picture, indicating the fragmentation of an earlier corpus rather than the conglomeration of strands which had formerly been separate and even alien.[39]

Early evidence for what I am proposing is to be found in Isaiah 40. This chapter seems to be a conjunction of all the elements of the hidden tradition which can only be reconstructed otherwise from a variety of later sources. The chapter is set in the holy of holies; the prophet hears the voices calling as did Isaiah.[40] The LORD sits 'above the circle of the earth' and 'stretches out the heavens like a curtain'; there is a glimpse of history as 'princes and rulers are brought to nothing'. The LORD 'measures the waters and marks off the heavens with a span', the weighing and measuring terms which characterize the creation accounts of the sanctuary tradition about Day One. There is reference to enlightenment, knowledge and understanding: 'Who taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding?' There is the challenge: 'To whom will you liken God?' a reference to the belief that the temple was a copy of what had been seen, followed by derision of the idol which the workman casts 'an image that will not move'. The prophet is told to look at the host of heaven whom the LORD has created and named, a reference to the sensitive issue of the sons of God on Day One. There is the question: 'Why do you say: My way is hidden from the LORD?' And finally, the prophet is reminded of *what he knows because he has been present in the sanctuary to see the works of creation*: 'Have you not known, have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?' (Isa. 40.21). It is significant that the Targum understands this as a revelation of the process of creation: 'Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has not *the work of the orders of creation* been announced to you from the beginning?' (*T. Isa.* 40.21). This is how that passage in Isaiah was understood at the end of the second temple period.

If this reconstruction of the world beyond the veil is correct, it illuminates several issues. First, the mixture of subjects in the apocalyptic texts can be explained: throne visions, lists of the secrets of creation and surveys of history which deal not only with the past but also with the future are *the knowledge given to those who passed beyond the veil of the temple*, the *raz nihyeh* of the Qumran texts. Second, it suggests that the material in the apocalypses originated with the high priests

since they were the ones who passed through the veil into the holy of holies. It gives a context for understanding the known priestly writings of the Hebrew scriptures with their concern for measurements and dates, and their conception of history as an unfolding plan.[41] Third, it establishes that this tradition was controversial as early as the exile and invites a closer look at what happened to the temple cult in the seventh century, the process so often described as 'Josiah's reform'. It explains, for example, why the description of the temple in 1 Kings mentions neither the chariot throne nor the veil and why the essential features of the world beyond the temple veil – the cherubim, the anointing oil – were later said to have disappeared from the temple not as a result of the Babylonians but *in the time of Josiah*.

If we adopt the widely accepted exilic dating of Isaiah 40, the sanctuary traditions which I have been reconstructing have implications which reach beyond Old Testament study. The early apologists, both Jewish and Christian, maintained that Plato learned from Moses, that he was Moses speaking Attic Greek. The most notable of these was Eusebius of Caesarea, who, in his work *The Preparation of the Gospel,* argued the case in great detail and listed all those who had held such views before him. Eusebius and the other apologists were probably correct.

My reconstruction suggests that the priests of the first temple knew an invisible, heavenly world on which the tabernacle or temple had been modelled; that they spoke of forms: the *form* of a man and the *form* of a throne; that they described the heavens as an embroidered curtain; that they knew the distinction between time, outside the veil, and eternity within it. They knew that time was the moving image of eternity. They knew of angels, the sons of God begotten on Day One, as Job suggests. They concerned themselves with the mathematics of the creation, the weights and the measures. They believed that the creation was bonded together by a great oath or covenant. They believed that the stars were divine beings, angels, and they described a creator whose work was completed not by motion but by Sabbath rest. What I have reconstructed as the secret tradition of the world beyond the temple veil would, *in any other context be identified as Plato's* Timaeus,[42] written in the middle of the fourth century BCE.

It is nearly forty years since Käsemann suggested that Apocalyptic, far from being something on the periphery of New Testament study, was in fact 'the mother of all Christian theology',[43] the legitimate development of ideas in the Old Testament. On the basis of my reconstructions, I suggest that the sanctuary traditions that survive in the apocalypses were not the development of ideas in the canonical Old Testament, but their antecedents. The apocalyptic texts were not the original product of a Hellenizing, oppressed minority group late in the second temple period, but the repository of Israel's oldest traditions, what I have called 'The Older Testament'.[44]

9

THE VEIL AS THE BOUNDARY

On the Second Day, God made the firmament to separate the waters above from the waters below (Gen. 1.6–8). As the second stage of constructing the tabernacle, Moses set up the veil to screen the ark, and to form the holy of holies (Exod. 40.20–21). It was to separate the holy from the most holy (Exod. 26.33), and to be the place in the midst of the creation where the LORD would dwell (Exod. 25.8; LXX 'appear'). For Christians the veil became the symbol of the Incarnation: it tore when Jesus died (Mark 15.38), and the Hebrew Christians knew it as a symbol of his flesh (Heb. 10.20). Early liturgy celebrated the opening of the veil, and the revealing of the Glory it had formerly concealed:

> We thank O LORD Our God, that thou hast given us boldness for the entrance of thy holy places which Thou hast renewed to us as a new and living way through the veil of the flesh of Thy Christ. We therefore being counted worthy to enter into the place of the tabernacle of Thy Glory, and to be within the veil, and to behold the holy of holies, cast ourselves down before thy goodness. (*Liturgy of James*)

There is a pattern about the symbolism of the veil, a logic which is consistent through many centuries, and through all the Abrahamic faiths. The veil divides the material world from other states beyond it yet still within the greater creation. The veil conceals yet reveals the Glory of God. Beyond the veil is the unity which is the heart and the source of the material world. One of the best introductions to the veil and its significance was written by a Muslim scholar: 'While rejecting the kind of emanationism that would deny Divine Transcendence, monotheistic esoterisms emphasise the basic truth that, although God transcends all limitation, the cosmos is, symbolically speaking, like 'His garment' which at once veils and reveals His Reality.'[1]

The veil is a major element in Sufi symbolism: 'The literal meaning of the word *kashf* is the lifting of the veil. In Sufi terminlogy it is applied to the Unseen spiritual realities and truths which lie beyond the veil, whether experienced ontologically or perceived through contemplative vision, *shohud*.'[2]

The reality beyond the veil is known in the fragments of Wisdom texts found at Qumran:

> By day and by night mediate on the *raz nihyeh* [the mystery of existence/mystery of becoming], and study it always. Then you will know truth and iniquity ... For the God of knowledge is the foundation of truth, and by the *raz nihyeh* he has laid out its foundation ... Gaze on the *raz nihyeh* and know the paths for everything that lives. (4Q417/418)[3]

The mysteries of the God of the Awesome Ones included knowledge of the past, present and future, as well as of the secrets of the creation. The *raz nihyeh* was the state beyond the veil, the unity beyond the diversity of the material world.

In the Gnostic systems, the veil was the boundary which separated and contained the 'fullness', i.e. the holy of holies. Irenaeus reports the Valentinian Ptolemy's teaching thus.

> The boundary, which they call by many names, has two functions: one that stabilises, the other that divides. In stabilising and establishing, it is the cross; in dividing and bounding it is the boundary ... And they say the Saviour disclosed its functions in the following words: 'That which does not lift up its cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.' (*Against Heresies* 1.3.5).

In so far as the veil represented the boundary between the material and spiritual states, to identify it as the cross was another way of making the evangelists' link between the flesh of Jesus and the veil. The cross as the boundary and veil survived in Western church architecture as the rood screen which separated nave from sanctuary and was surmounted by a cross.

The veil (*paroket*) of the temple was woven from four colours: blue, purple, crimson and white, and embroidered with cherubim (2 Chron. 3.14). The white thread was linen and the coloured threads were probably wool. The veil (*paroket*) of the desert tabernacle was similar, woven from blue, purple, crimson and linen 'with cherubim', 'the work of a skilled person' (Exod. 26.31; 36.35, cf. the ten outer curtains (*y'riy'ah*) of the tabernacle, also 'skilled work' Exod. 26.1). The veil was set up to separate the holy place from the most holy, and thus to screen the ark and the mercy seat. There was another curtain (*masak*) of similar colours at the outer door of the tabernacle, but this was 'embroidered with needlework', literally 'variegated work' (Exod. 26.36). The significance of this distinction is not known, but it must have been important, because the heavenly figures described in the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* wear robes of fabric like the outer curtain, 'variegated work' (4Q405.20–22), but 'the chiefs of those who serve, the holy ones of the king of holiness', wear a fabric like the veil, 'skilled work' (4Q405.23), exactly what was prescribed for the high priest's outer vestment (Exod. 28.6). *The similarity of the veil and the vestment is the key to understanding the role of the high priest and the temple context of the concept of Incarnation.*

The account of the Jerusalem temple in 1 Kings, however, says nothing of any veil or its purpose. Solomon marked the border between the holy place and the holy of holies by 'chains' (1 Kgs 6.21). The word translated 'chains', *r'tuqah,* may not mean precisely that, because it is a rare word. In Isaiah 40.19 it is the silver 'chains' of the idol, and a similar word in Nahum 3.10 is translated 'bound' in fetters. Solomon marked

the boundary with something to 'bind' rather than to veil. Nor does the account in 1 Kings 6.23–28 say that the two golden cherubim in the holy of holies formed a chariot throne. Information about the veil and the chariot throne is found only in 1 Chronicles 28.18 and 2 Chronicles 3.14, which raises questions about the purpose of the two accounts. Either 1 Kings, written in the style and manner of the Deuteronomists, was omitting certain information about the ancient temple, or the Chronicler, with his priestly interests, was adding fictitious details. If the chariot throne and the veil were controversial, it must have been because of the theology they represented. For the priestly writer of Chronicles they were important, but for the Deuteronomists, the heirs to those who had 'reformed' the temple, they were better omitted. The question raised by the veil, and by the other aspects of the holy of holies such as the throne and the angels, is this: Were they an integral part of the first temple, and did they signify something in the theology of that temple, or were they fictions from a later age retrojected onto the early period? The evidence suggests that the veil, and what it both concealed and revealed, is the key to understanding the world of the first temple.

Memories were long on the matter of temple furnishings: in the time of Josiah, according to the Babylonian Talmud, the ark, the anointing oil, the jar of manna, Aaron's rod and the coffer sent as a gift by the Philistines when they returned the ark, were all hidden away (*b. Horayoth* 12a, *b. Kerithoth* 5b). According to the great *Commentary on Numbers*, there were five things which had been in the first temple but not in the second, which would be restored in the time of the Messiah: the fire, the ark, the menorah, the spirit and the cherubim (*Num. R.* XV. 10). Both these traditions witness to the fact that there was a huge difference between the furnishing of the first temple and the second, and therefore a corresponding difference in the theology. The omission of the veil and the chariot throne from the Deuteronomists' account of the first temple is, for Christian readers, far more than just an academic issue, because the veil of the temple became an important part of Christian imagery, even though the Deuteronomists' view of Israel, its history and institutions, has come to dominate the way Christians are taught to understand the Old Testament.

Josephus, writing at the end of the first century CE, said that the veil of the holy of holies in the desert tabernacle had been embroidered with flowers and patterns, but no animal forms (*Ant.* 3.124). The temple in his own time had a veil at the entrance to the holy of holies, but he did not describe it. The outer curtain, he said, was woven from blue, purple, crimson and linen, as prescribed for the outer curtain of the tabernacle, and it was embroidered in Babylonian work. Josephus does not say what this was, and he gives no further detail of the needlework on the curtain, except that it depicted a panorama of the heavens (*War* 5.211–14). (This Babylonian work must correspond to the 'variegated

work' prescribed in Exodus 26.36.) The Mishnah says that 'the measure' of the holy of holies was 20 cubits, presumably the side length of the square floor (*m. Middoth* 4.7), but there is nothing about the dimensions of the entrance at this time. This makes it impossible to reconstruct how the veil was actually hung, since the Mishnah says it measured 20 × 40 cubits, i.e. 10 × 20 metres. A single curtain draped across the width of the holy of holies is the most obvious possibility. If the veil had been some 200 square metres of heavy fabric, it would explain why 300 priests were needed to immerse it in water if ever it became unclean. The description of the weaving is no longer clear, but it seems that the curtain was woven from 72 strips of fabric approximately 'one handbreadth' wide, each having 24 warp threads (*m. Shekalim* 8.4–5). This suggests a very thick linen warp, with less than two threads to the centimetre, and a woollen weft. It must have been a very valuable piece of fabric.

Later commentators saw in the four colours of the veil the symbolism of the four elements from which the world was created. Josephus, who was a contemporary of the first Christians, and came from a high priestly family (*Life* 1), explained that the colours woven together had a mystic meaning: the scarlet was fire, the linen was the earth, the blue the air and the purple the sea. 'The comparison in two cases is suggested by their colour, and in that of the fine linen and the purple by their origin as the one is produced by the earth and the other by the sea' (*War* 5.212–13). The veil thus represented matter, the stuff of the visible creation. Josephus repeated this explanation of the colours in a later work, where he added that the whole tabernacle recalled and represented the universe (*Ant.* 3.180). The colour symbolism of the veil must have been widely known, because Philo, also writing in the first century CE and from a priestly family, gave the same explanation: the four colours symbolized the four elements from which the visible world had been made. 'Moses thought it right that the divine temple of the Creator of all things should be woven of such and so many things as the world was made of, [being] the universal temple, which [existed] before the holy temple' (*Questions on Exodus* 2.85).

Antiochus Epiphanes took the temple veil as loot when he sacked Jerusalem in 169 BCE (*1 Macc.* 1.21–22), and he seems to have given it to the temple of Zeus in Olympia, because Pausanius, writing in the second century CE said: 'In Olympia there is a woollen curtain, adorned with Assyrian weaving, and Phoenician purple, which was dedicated by Antiochus' (Pausanius, *Description of Greece*, V 12 2). The 'Assyrian weaving' is presumably what Josephus called 'Babylonian work'. Another veil was taken as loot by Titus after the sack of Jerusalem in 70 CE. He ordered the golden temple vessels to be stored in the Temple of Peace, but the scrolls of the Law and the veil of the holy of holies he kept in his palace (*War* 7.162). A rabbi who taught in the middle of the

second century CE saw the veil there: 'Said R. Eleazar b. R. Jose "I myself saw it in Rome and there were drops of blood on it." And he told me "These are the drops of blood from the Day of Atonement"' (*Tosefta Kippurim* 2.16).

Later tradition records that the temple veil was given to the Great Church of The Holy Wisdom in Constantinople. Bishop Antony of Novgorod went as a pilgrim to the Great Church in 1200 CE, and he wrote in his *Pilgrim Book* a description of the treasures of the city shortly before it was sacked by the Crusaders. He identified the altar curtain in the Church of The Holy Wisdom with the veil of the second temple, brought first to Rome and then given to the Great Church. This is not impossible. The great scroll of the Law, which had been kept in the palace in Rome, was given by the emperor, Severus (222–35 CE), to a new synagogue; the veil of the temple, the only other item from the temple retained in the palace, could well have been given to a church and later set in the Great Church. The veil was said by Bishop Antony to be the most important image in the church; *The Pilgrim Book* records that the veil was made of gold and silver, perhaps meaning that it was a holy relic inside a covering curtain of gold and silver, and that it hung from the pillars of the ciborium, above the altar. When Bishop Antony asked the reason for the veil hanging there over the altar, he was told: 'It is so that the women and all the people can see, for their minds and hearts should not be darkened when they are attending on the service of God our LORD, the Creator of Heaven and Earth'. Seeing past the veil was thus the central image of the Great Church.[4]

The veil of the desert tabernacle had been hung from four pillars 'of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, upon four bases of silver' (Exod. 26.32). It is usually assumed that these four stood in a straight line, thus forming three spaces between them. These were copied in later church architecture as the three doors of the traditional ikon screen, which, like the veil, represented the boundary between earth and heaven. It is possible, however, that they had been at the four corners of a square enclosure, the veil being hung around all four sides with the two ends overlapping at the front to give access to the inner space. The Letter to the Hebrews is ambiguous, describing a tent beyond the second curtain, in contrast to the first tent in which was the lamp and the table for the shewbread (Heb. 9.2–4). That there had been a single curtain hung round four pillars with an overlap at the front is one possible interpretation of the evidence in the Mishnah. The high priest went through the space between the two curtains, it was said, and there was a cubit's space between them. The outer (part of the) curtain was hung on the south side and the inner on the north. R. Jose, however, emphasized that there was only one curtain (*m. Yoma* 5.1). Such an arrangement would explain why the curtain had to be other

than 20 cubits square, and it would explain how the high priest managed to enter the holy of holies.

Later memories do suggest that the holy of holies had been formed by four pillars set at the corners of a square. In ikons, the holy of holies is depicted as a canopy supported by four pillars, which may be no more than the artist depicting the original holy of holies in the form of the familiar Christian holy of holies. But this raises the question of how and why the Christians had come to represent the holy of holies in that way. The corresponding structure in a church is the baldachin – four pillars and a canopy over the altar. The name itself means literally a rich fabric from Baghdad, which may be an interesting link to the temple curtain described as Assyrian weaving or Babylonian tapestry.[5]

However it was actually formed, this most sacred space, the holy of holies, was situated at the inner end of the tabernacle and was in effect a house within a house. The equivalent space in the temple had been lined with gold (1 Kgs 6.20), which Enoch saw in his vision as a place of fire. He ascended through the heavens, which he described as a temple, to stand before the throne: 'There was a second house, greater than the former, and the entire portal stood open before me and it was built of flames of fire' (*1 En.* 14.15). ***In the first temple, then, the LORD was in the midst of the creation, in a place of fire.***

The Boundary between Earth and Heaven

The veil, in whatever way it was hung, represented the work of the second day of creation. It was to separate and to screen. Moses set the veil in place to screen the ark and thus to conceal the holy of holies (Exod. 40.20–21), and in Genesis 1.6–8 it was described as the 'firmament', to separate what was above from what was below. It was the only work of creation that God did not see as good. For every other day there was the refrain: 'And God saw that it was good' but not for the second day.

Philo explained that the veil was the boundary between the visible and the invisible creation, that the world beyond the veil was unchanging and without transient events, but that the visible, material world outside the veil was a place of change (*Questions on Exodus* 2.91). It is significant that he gave the same explanation in his commentary on the creation stories, i.e. that he naturally linked the symbolism of the temple to the creation described in Genesis. Philo considered this an apt name for the book, since it described the 'becoming' of all things, how they began. Genesis was a description of the origin of the visible world which came into being, existed and then passed away (*Creation* 12). The day before the second day was not 'the first day' but 'Day One', when God formed the invisible world as the pattern for the visible creation (*Creation* 16). Since time was measured by the movement and passing of

material things, he explained, 'in the beginning' cannot have been part of a temporal sequence of events. Time began either simultaneously with the world or after it (*Creation* 26). Day One, then, was outside time and matter. In so far as Day One was at the heart of the temple/tabernacle, this eternal state beyond time and matter was within the creation, but invisible beyond the veil of matter. It was the place where Moses stood before the ark and heard the voice of the LORD from between the two cherubim on the *kapporet* (Exod. 25.22).

Philo's understanding of the temple and its veil is usually explained as his synthesis of temple imagery and the world view of Plato. His contrast between the world beyond the veil as the place of being, and the world outside the veil as the world of becoming, together with his description of the patterns by which the creation was formed, are immediately recognized as Platonism by scholars who bring a classical education to their study of the Old Testament and the New. Such an explanation, however, raises enormous questions about the date of certain Old Testament texts, for a similar view of the temple and function of the veil is apparent in places where the Old Testament text is far older than Plato. It belongs to the world of the first temple, the world of Deutero-Isaiah the prophet who had stood beyond the veil, and of Ezekiel the priest who spoke of heavenly forms and their appearances, another element associated with Plato.[6]

This ancient understanding of the function of the veil can be traced well into the Christian era, proof that traditions from the older temple survived outside what we read as the normative Old Testament. Cosmas Indicopleustes ('the man who had sailed to India'), was an Egyptian Christian who wrote a *Christian Topography* in the sixth century CE. He explained that the earth was rectangular and constructed like a huge tent because Moses had been commanded to build the tabernacle as a copy of the whole creation, which he had been shown on Sinai. The 'six days' when Moses had been in the cloud on Sinai (*Exod.* 24.15–16) had been six days of vision which became the six days of Genesis 1. 'When Moses came down from the mountain, he was ordered by God to make the tabernacle which was a representation of what he had seen on the mountain, namely an impress of the whole world.' The creation Moses had seen was divided into two parts:

> Since therefore it had been shown him how God made the heaven and the earth, and how on the second day he made the firmament in the middle between them and thus made the one place into two places, so Moses in like manner, in accordance with the pattern which he had seen, made the tabernacle and placed the veil in the middle and by this division made the one tabernacle into two, the inner and the outer. (Cosmas 2.35)

This is how Cosmas understood the command to Moses in Exodus 25.9 and 40, to make the tabernacle as a copy of what he had seen on the mountain, and to divide it by the veil.

The veil which divides the creation and screens the secrets of the holy of holies are ideas found in earlier Christian texts: 'Peter' in the *Clementine Recognitions* explained the creation using imagery of a temple divided into two parts. Heaven and earth had originally been one house, but the Creator separated what is above from what is below by causing the waters to congeal into a great ice. 'And so he divided into two portions that fabric of the universe, although it was but one house ... that the upper portion might afford a dwelling place to angels and the lower to men' (*Clem. Rec.* 1.27). This frozen water which separated heaven from earth was the 'sea of glass' before the throne which John saw in Rev. 4.6 and 15.2, and in the sixth century BCE, Ezekiel in his vision had described the boundary between heaven and earth as 'terrible ice'[7] over the heads of the living creatures. Just as Moses on Sinai had received the heavenly plan for the tabernacle, so, too, David had received a plan for the temple he was preparing to build. He entrusted to Solomon what he had received 'from the hand of the LORD' (1 Chron. 28.19). Heavenly patterns to be copied on earth were thus part of the ancient temple tradition, and so Philo was not merely expressing his ancestral tradition in terms of Platonism when he wrote as he did about the unchanging eternal world beyond the veil, the transient nature of the visible creation, and the heavenly pattern from which the visible creation was copied. One creation divided into two parts by the veil, with heavenly 'forms' above and their material counterparts in the visible world, *was* his ancestral tradition. Job had described the Creator covering the face/presence of the throne (Job 26.9)[8], and Moses had had to veil his radiant face when he came from the presence of the LORD (Exod. 34.29–35).

Memories of the veil and its significance were to last for centuries; among the Nag Hammadi Gnostic texts, *The Reality of the Rulers*, also known as *The Hypostasis of the Archons,* has Eleleth, one of the four Light Givers who stand in the presence of the Holy Spirit, describe the process of creation: 'Within limitless realms dwells Incorruptibility. Wisdom, who is called Faith, wanted to create something alone without her consort and her product was a celestial thing.[9] A veil exists between the world above and the realms that are below and shadow came into being beneath the veil, and that shadow became Matter, and that shadow was projected apart' (CG II.4.94). The text goes on to describe this androgynous being who believed he was the only God. He created offspring for himself and told them he was the God of the Entirety. His name was Sabaoth,[10] although others called him Samael, the blind God. Eventually Wisdom his mother established him in the seventh heaven 'below the veil between above and below' (CG II.4.95). Here we see a divine being projected through the veil and into the material world, and then enthroned by his mother in the seventh heaven. Since this is a text which is hostile to the Old Testament

position whilst using the same traditions to pursue its arguments, i.e. this is a quarrel within the Old Testament family, it is evidence for a form of Hebrew religion which did not accept that Sabaoth was the only God. This creation story, with its temple imagery, must have been older than the familiar monotheism of the Old Testament, and it had a place for Wisdom. This must be the pre/non-Deuteronomic religion, and the creation story is told in terms of worlds above and below the veil.[11] *It also describes the* LORD *coming through the veil to take a material form.*

Another Nag Hammadi text, *On the Origin of the World*, is similar. After the immortals had been created out of the boundless One, Wisdom wished to create something from the light, that is, the upper world above the shadow. 'Immediately her wish appeared as a heavenly likeness, which possessed an incomprehensible greatness, which is in the middle between the immortals and those who came into being after them, like what is above, which is a veil that separates men and those belonging to the above' (CG II.5.98). The text goes on to describe the great chariot throne of Sabaoth with its 64 forms, 'a throne concealed by a great light cloud'. Wisdom sat with him in the light cloud, and taught him about 'those which exist in the eighth [the highest heaven] so that the likeness of those might be created' (CG II.5.106). This is doubtless based on the poem in Proverbs 8, where Wisdom is beside the LORD as he creates the material world, but there is additional detail; Wisdom brings what seem to be the forms from the higher realm so that they can be created. Passing through the veil was the process of entering and acquiring the visible material state. It was incarnation. Passing back through the veil (as described in the story of the Ascension of Jesus) was the process of shedding this state and returning to the unity outside time and matter.

The Veil and Incarnation

The vital connection between the veil and incarnation was symbolized by the vestments of the high priest. *He alone wore garments of the same fabric as the veil.* Outside the holy of holies the high priest wore a vestment of 'skilled work' (Exod. 28.6), the same fabric as the veil of the holy of holies. The ordinary priests wore four garments: coats, girdles, caps and breeches (Exod. 28.40–43) but the high priest had more complicated robes. It is not easy to determine exactly what these were, as the Hebrew words are technical terms. Doubtless the shape of the vestments changed over the centuries, even if the names remained the same. The high priest, however, wore an outer garment (*ephod*) made of the same fabric as the veil: blue, purple, scarlet and linen, skilled work, woven through with gold. He also wore a long blue robe, decorated around the hem with bells and 'pomegranates' (Exod. 28.31–35), a coat, a girdle, a turban and a golden 'plate' engraved with the sacred

Name. The Hebrew Scriptures say nothing of the symbolism of these vestments, just as there is nothing about the symbolism of the tabernacle/temple itself. Writers at the end of the second temple period, however, gave accounts of the elaborate symbolism of both the veil and the vestments of the high priest.

The vestments symbolized the whole creation: according to Josephus, the linen under-robe represented the earth, the blue robe with the bells and pomegranates was the sky, and the multicoloured ephod 'denoted universal nature, which it pleased God to make of four elements, being further interwoven with gold, in token, I imagine, of the all pervading sunlight' (*Ant.* 3.184). Philo gives three elaborate accounts of the symbolism, not all identical in detail, but the gist is the same: the outer vestments represented the creation. 'Such is the form in which the sacred vesture was designed, a copy of the universe ... that the high priest should have in evidence upon him an image of the All ... that in performing his office he should have the whole universe as his fellow ministrant ... (*Special Laws* 1.95–96). The *Wisdom of Solomon*, a century or so older than the writings of Philo and Josephus, has simply: 'Upon his [Aaron's] long robe the whole world was depicted' (*Wisd.* 18.24). The significance of the high priest's additional vestments outside the holy of holies, i.e. in the visible creation, is that he was an angel clothed in the matter of this world. *He was an incarnate angel, and the Name he wore showed who he was.* Just as the veil concealed the Presence in the holy of holies, so the vestments concealed the Presence in the world. The garments of the high priest were the garments of God (*Exod. R.* XXXVIII.8); the *finely woven* garments of the priests (Exod. 39.41) were said to be made from the *remnants* of the heavenly robes (Zohar, *Exod.* 229b).[12]

The association of the veil and the incarnation is assumed in the *Infancy Gospel of James*, an early Christian text which depicts Mary as Wisdom[13] and describes her birth and early life, and then the birth of Jesus. Mary had been offered to the temple as a child, just as the child Samuel had been offered to the temple at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1.24–28). When she was twelve years old she was betrothed to Joseph, a widower, whose son James was the author of this account. Shortly afterwards, the priests commissioned a new veil for the temple. Seven pure virgins, one of whom was Mary, were chosen for the work, and lots were cast as to who should spin and weave the various colours: gold, white, scarlet, blue and purple.[14] Mary was given the purple and the scarlet to work, the symbols of water and fire. As she was spinning the purple, she saw the angel of the LORD who told her that she would have a son named Jesus. Thus Mary was making the new veil for the temple whilst she was pregnant. It is possible that this was just an early legend, vividly linking the incarnation to the veil of the temple, but there is no reason why Mary should not have been literally engaged on making a new

temple veil. According to the Mishnah, a new veil had to be woven by young girls (*m. Shekalim* 8.5), and, since Herod began to rebuild the temple in 20 BCE and Jesus was a young child in Egypt when Herod died in 4 BCE (Matt. 2.19), it is not impossible that Mary was a temple weaver at that time. The temple building was not finished until 62 CE. What is significant is that an early Christian storyteller could assume this link of the veil and the incarnation. This is the story depicted in the ikon of the Annunciation, where Mary is spinning the red and purple wool when she hears the angel. In an early Christian Wisdom text, she offers her child 'a high priestly garment woven from every wisdom' (*The Teaching of Silvanus*, CG VII.4.89).

The veil as the flesh of the LORD had been assumed by the Letter to the Hebrews, and implied by the gospel writers who linked the death of Jesus to the tearing of the temple veil. 'The new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain [*katapetasma*, the Greek translation of *paroket*, the veil of the holy of holies], that is through his flesh ...' (Heb. 10.20) can have no other meaning, and yet it was written without explanation to an early Christian community. They had also seen significance in the tearing of the temple veil (*katapetasma*) at the moment of Jesus' death (Matt. 27.51; Mark 15.38; Luke 23.45). Since Jesus had passed beyond the veil and so beyond time, he was 'the same yesterday, today and forever' (Heb. 13.8).

The temple veil as a symbol of incarnation is deep rooted in Christian tradition.[15] St Symeon of Thessalonike (died 1429) explained the symbolism of the vestments thus: 'The exit of the priest from the sanctuary and his descent to the nave signifies the descent of Christ from heaven and his humility. That the priest wears sacerdotal vestments signifies the incarnation'.[16] Best known perhaps are the lines in Charles Wesley's 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing':

> Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate deity
> Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus our Immanuel.

Time and Eternity

Beyond the veil, the hidden place, was eternity in the midst of the creation, and the veil itself was believed to be a great screen on which all history could be seen. The Hebrew word for eternity *'lm* is a root with many meanings; it can be the distant past, the distant future, or a long period of time, but it can also be the hidden, concealed or secret place. Later texts, written long after the temple had been destroyed, give the context and describe in detail how a mystic who entered the holy of holies was able to see the whole of history from his vantage point outside time. The clearest of these is *3 Enoch* which describes how R. Ishmael the high priest was taken into heaven and shown all the history

of the world on the reverse side of the veil, as though on a great screen. 'R. Ishmael said: Metatron said to me: Come and I will show you the curtain of the Omnipresent One, which is spread before the Holy One Blessed be He, and on which are printed all the generations of the world and all their deeds, whether done or to be done, till the last generation.' When R. Ishmael had seen all history before him, he praised God and said: 'The word of the King is paramount, and who will say to him Why do that? He who obeys the command will come to no harm' (*3 En.* 45). *3 Enoch* is relatively late, compiled by Jews in Babylon. From the same community came the Babylonian Talmud, where we read: 'The Holy One ... showed Adam every generation' (*b. Sanhedrin* 38b). Traditions not included in the Old Testament were widely known in Jewish (and later, in Christian) communities. *3 Enoch*, though compiled in the fifth century CE, preserved many of them.

Many were also preserved in the later Moses legends, as a result of Moses taking over the roles of the king after the demise of the monarchy. Entry into the holy of holies was fused with the imagery of the ascent of Sinai, and so what lay beyond the veil was revealed to Moses on Sinai. The first chapter of *Jubilees* describes how Moses on Sinai learned from the LORD the whole history of the world, from the creation until the last times, and how the Angel of the Presence was instructed to write it down for him. Similar traditions appear in texts from the end of the first century CE: Moses on Sinai was shown not only the secret knowledge of the creation but also the 'end of time' (*2 Bar.* 59.4-10; *2 Esdr.* 14.5).

The best-known example in Christian texts is John's description of how he entered heaven. He had been in the outer part of the temple and seen the Man and the seven lamps (Rev. 1). After receiving the seven letters, he saw a door open in heaven and he heard a voice summoning him to enter. 'Come up hither and I will show you what must take place after this' (Rev. 4.1). The open door must have been the access to the holy of holies, i.e. heaven, and when he entered, he saw a panorama unfold before him. Not everything in the Book of Revelation, however, is a prediction of the future; some events, such as the opening of the six seals and the woes of the first six trumpets, had already happened. John was writing when the final days were expected: the seventh seal and the last trumpet.[17] Jesus' experience in the desert also implies this visionary view of history; he was taken up high and shown 'all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time' (Lk. 4.5). He must have spoken of this to his disciples, as he was alone in the desert when he had this experience.

Enoch had been taken up from the earth to see a vision of the future. He was seized by three angels and taken up to a tower[18] high above the earth, and there he saw the future story of his people unfold before him (*1 En.* 87.3). In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (a Jewish text from the early

years of the Christian era, extant only in Old Slavonic), the patriarch ascends with his angel guide and stands before the heavenly throne. The Eternal One then commands him: 'Look now beneath your feet at the firmament, and understand the creation that is depicted upon it from of old and the creatures which are in it and the age prepared after it' (*Apoc. Ab.* 21.1). Here the 'screen' is described not as the veil but as the firmament. Another text from the same period is the *Ascension of Isaiah*, a Jewish text expanded and preserved by Christians. Isaiah's disciples heard a door being opened in heaven and the prophet being invited to ascend (*Asc. Isa.* 6.6). He went up in his vision and stood before the throne; there he looked out on the whole history of the incarnation and saw how the LORD was sent down from heaven to earth and how the angel of the Holy Spirit appeared to Mary. 'Isaiah' in this text is probably a pseudonym for James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem.[19] The detail in the Book of Revelation, the enigmatic line in the account of Jesus' temptations in the desert, and the account in the *Ascension of Isaiah* show that these overviews of history were known to the early Christians as the mystical experiences of their leaders.

Centuries earlier, the prophet Habakkuk had had a similar experience of seeing the future whilst standing in the holy of holies, described here, as in *1 Enoch*, as a tower (Hab. 2.1–2). The psalmist too, when he was perplexed by the apparent prosperity of the wicked, went into the temple. 'I went into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end' (Ps. 73.17). Although there is no reference to the temple veil, there must have been something in the holy of holies whereby the seers saw the future. Neither Habakkuk nor Psalm 73 can be dated, but a similar passage in the Second Isaiah is usually dated to the exile, i.e. before the second temple was built. The veil is not mentioned, but the subject matter is familiar: the juxtaposition of creation, history and 'the beginning' suggest a vision in the holy of holies, with the prophet standing on the far side of the veil.

> Has it not been told you from the beginning?
> Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
> It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
> and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
> who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
> and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;
> who brings princes to naught,
> and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. (Isa. 40.21–23)

The prophet was standing where Wisdom had stood at the creation of the world (Prov. 8.22–31), where Enoch had stood to watch and record the creation of the world (*2 En.* 23–30), and where the *Book of Jubilees* placed Moses to watch the creation of the world.[20] Job, apparently, had not had this experience. He had claimed to be wise, but the LORD

asked him: 'Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth ... when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy?' (Job 38.4, 7). Job was not wise; he had not been initiated into the secrets of the creation and he did not know. The prophet, however, had learned things from the time of the foundation of the earth, i.e. from before the third day of creation. He had learned that the heavens had been stretched out like a curtain, as the dwelling place of the Creator, i.e. he had seen the formation of the firmament on the second day. This is temple imagery, where the veil screens the Glory and forms the dwelling of the Creator, and is the holy of holies, 'the beginning'.

The division of the creation into the eternal unchanging state and the visible changing world seems at first glance to be borrowed from Plato, but Isaiah 40 was written long before *Timaeus*. Compare the famous line: 'Time is the moving image of eternity' (*Tim.* 37d) and Isaiah's condemnation of the man who makes an idol as an image of God: 'He seeks out a skilful craftsman to set up an image that will not move' (Isa. 40.20). A great deal of what has been identified as Platonism in early Christian usage is more likely to be the ancient priestly view of the world separated into two states by the veil. Philo, explaining Genesis 1, 'In the beginning God made heaven and earth' said: 'We take beginning not, as some think, in a chronological sense, for there was no time before there was a world. Time began either simultaneously with the world, or after it' (*Creation* 26).

Those who entered the holy of holies saw 'history' from beyond time and matter. This is why R. Ishmael the high priest saw all history on the reverse of the veil. Clement of Alexandria taught that knowledge of things past, present and future had been revealed by the Son of God (*Misc.* 7.17), elsewhere described by him as the great high priest who had passed through the curtain.[21] Later Jewish mystics also claimed this knowledge; R. Nehuniah in his ecstacy saw the very bonds of the eternal covenant, 'the mysteries and secrets, the bonds and wonders ... the weaving of the web that completes the world'. R. Akiba had seen the whole inhabited world, just as it was.[22] The *Gospel of Philip* includes the enigmatic lines: 'The mysteries of truth are revealed, though in type and image. The bridal chamber remains hidden. The veil at first concealed how God controlled the creation, but when the veil is rent and the things inside are revealed, this house will be left desolate ...' (CG II.3 84).

The overview of all history, past, present and future, was a characteristic of the so-called apocalyptic writings, the deposit of the ancient high priestly traditions. The 'historical' books of the Old Testament, on the other hand, are largely the product of those who were trying to suppress the temple tradition. The people who made remembering a religious duty: 'Remember that you were a slave in Egypt' (Deut. 5.15), 'Remember what Amalek did to you' (Deut.

25.17), 'Remember the days of old' (Deut. 32.7), were those who first created this history for their people and made it a part of their religion. These biblical histories do not fit easily with other aspects of Israel's religion; the religion of Abraham and the patriarchs lies beneath the religion of Moses.[23] An older name for the deity was replaced by the name of the God of Moses, the Sinai story was grafted late onto the story of Moses and the Exodus, whereas the Enochic history in the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (*1 En.* 93) is the story of Abraham and then the temple with neither Moses nor the Exodus. The feasts of Unleavened Bread, Weeks and Tabernacles had the Moses stories (Passover, Sinai and desert wanderings respectively) grafted onto the older observances. Moses put on someone else's costume. Throughout the second temple period he became more and more kinglike, and Sinai, the place of his vision, became more and more like the sanctuary of the first temple. Thus Philo could write of Moses: 'He was named God and King [*theos kai basileus*] and entered into the darkness where God was, into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of all existing things' (*Moses* 1.158), a place which was not originally Sinai. Thus, too, the Moses of the *Book of Jubilees* saw the history of his people, 'what was in the beginning and what would be in the future' (*Jub.* 1.4). This was the *raz nihyeh* of the Qumran Wisdom texts.

We are accustomed to understand 'biblical history' as the works of the Deuteronomists, telling the story of the chosen people. The world of the temple was different, with all history – past and future – present beyond the veil. Consider now a few lines from a study of Jewish history and Jewish memory, which show that the 'temple' understanding of history was not lost:

> When we turn from the Bible to classical rabbinic literature, be it Talmud or Midrash, we seem to find ourselves on a different and unfamiliar terrain as far as history is concerned ... Unlike the biblical writers, the rabbis seem to play with time as though with an accordion, expanding it and collapsing it at will. Where historical specificity is the hallmark of biblical narratives, here that acute biblical sense of time and place often gives way to a rampant and seemingly unselfconscious anachronism. In the world of Aggadah, Adam can instruct his son Seth in the Torah ... and the patriarchs institute the three daily prayers of the normative Jewish liturgy. Of course there is something rather compelling about that large portion of the rabbinic universe in which the ordinary barriers of time can be ignored and all ages placed in an ever fluid dialogue with one another.[24]

The veil marked the boundary between the two states; the one causes us no difficulty because it is the world of which we are immediately aware, the state of time and matter. It is more difficult to imagine or to describe the world beyond the veil, the place of unity[25] beyond time and matter where there is no time. Recent developments in cosmology, however, show that the insights of the ancient priesthood have

remarkable similarities to the most recent developments in the concept of time necessitated by the theory of relativity. The following are extracts from a recent book on the subject:

> Time is so fundamental to our experience of the world that any attempt to tinker with it meets with great scepticism and resistance. The revolution in the concept of time which has accompanied the theory of relativity is best summarised by saying that previously time was regarded as absolute, fixed and universal ... independent of material bodies and observers. Today time is seen to be dynamical. It can stretch and shrink, warp and even stop altogether at a singularity ... The abandonment of a distinct past, present and future is a profound step, for the temptation to think that only the present exists is great. It is usually presumed without thinking that the future is as yet unformed and perhaps undetermined; the past has gone, remembered but relinquished. Past and future, one wishes to believe, do not exist ...
>
> Our psychological perception of time differs so radically from the model that even many physicists have come to doubt whether some vital ingredient has been missed.[26]

The Temple Rituals

Since the holy of holies was Day One and outside time, the temple rituals performed there must also have been outside time. Little is known for certain about the rituals of the first temple, but some things can with caution be reconstructed. First there are the rituals associated with the throne between the two great cherubim. Since there was no cherub throne in the second temple, all references to the throne must be set in the first temple, even if this is only a fond memory of how things should have been. The LORD was in his holy temple, his throne was in heaven. This was the psalmist's view (Ps. 11.4). Isaiah saw the LORD enthroned in the temple (Isa. 6.1), and yet the kings in Jerusalem sat on that same throne. Solomon sat on *the throne of the LORD* as king (1 Chron. 29.23), and all the assembled people worshipped the LORD, the king (1 Chron. 29.20, translating what the Hebrew says, and not the usual alteration). All the references to the throne must also be references to 'heaven', and the humans involved must be participants in the heavenly drama. The king was the LORD, and Psalm 2 describes the installation of the king. The LORD set his king on Zion, his holy hill and then declared that he was his son: 'Today I have begotten you.' Thus the human king became the 'son' of the LORD in the holy of holies, and was then regarded as the LORD himself. Isaiah 9.6 describes the scene, with the angels in the holy of holies proclaiming: 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be ...'. The Hebrew and the LXX differ markedly at this point. The Hebrew has what seem to have been four throne names, perhaps the fourfold presence: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, to use

the familiar renderings. The LXX, however, knew that the four were one, and so has only one name: The Angel of Great Counsel (Wisdom?). The king at his 'birth' became the Wise Angel, perhaps the reason for the wise woman of Tekoa's remark to King David: 'You are as wise as the Angel of God' (2 Sam. 14.20).

The difficult text of Ps. 110 (LXX, 109) also describes the birth of the king. Some aspects of the kingmaking are clear enough; he is to sit at the right hand of the LORD and rule over his enemies. Then there is obscurity; verses 3 and 4 are almost impenetrable. The king is perhaps to be a priest unto eternity, and Melchizedek is mentioned. It could mean that he was to be a priest, like Melchizedek, although the Hebrew is not clear. 'Like' could also mean 'in the sanctuary of', so perhaps the king was to be a priest in eternity in the sanctuary of Melchizedek. This would locate him in the holy of holies. The final part of verse 3 (where RSV has 'like dew your youth will come to you') was understood by the translator of the LXX to mean 'I have begotten you', in which case 'on the day you lead your host' would be better read as 'on the day of your birth' ('host' and 'birth' being similar words in Hebrew). 'Upon the holy mountains' is more likely to mean 'in the glory of the holy ones'.[27] It would be interesting to know what the kings wore on these occasions. A white robe in the holy of holies, perhaps, and then a robe woven with gold in the other parts of the temple, like the robe of the later high priests? The key figure in the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, the Spirit of Glory, wears fine gold work which sheds light (4Q405.23). When Ben Sira described the high priest Simon, he emphasized his glorious vestments. 'When he put on his glorious robe, and clothed himself with superb perfection, and went up to the holy altar, he made the court of the sanctuary glorious' (*Ben Sira* 50.11). Most important of all would be to know what the ancient kings wore as a crown or diadem. Was it like that of the later high priests, inscribed with the Sacred Name, because the high priest was the LORD with his people? These are speculations; what is fact is that this Psalm, more than any other, has become impossible to read. There can be no doubt that it described the most crucial aspect of the ancient royal cult, namely, how the king was believed to become divine, and it would have been classed as a secret of the holy of holies. It became the most used text in the New Testament, and so prompts the question: did the first Christians know the original significance of this psalm? If they did, and if that understanding had survived into the fourth century, there might have been different debates in the fourth century about the one or two natures of our LORD, and whether or how he was both God and Man, and what it meant to be Son of God.

As we have seen, the holy of holies was fused in later tradition with the summit of Sinai, and the figure of Moses became more and more like the ancient kings. Thus, what is attributed to Moses by writers such

as Philo is a valuable source of information about the royal cult of the first temple, and it is not surprising to find that Moses, too, was 'reborn'. The biblical account says that when Moses was on Sinai, he drew near to the thick darkness where God was (Exod. 20.21) and entered the cloud when it covered the mountain (Exod. 24.15–16). Philo, however, retells the story differently: 'For he was named God and King of the whole nation and entered we are told, into the darkness where God was, that is, into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of all things. Thus he beheld what is hidden from the sight of mortal nature ...' (*Moses* 1.158). Moses became God and King in the 'holy of holies'. Cosmas Indicopleustes, too, attributed to Moses on Sinai far more than is recorded in Exodus, and not just the traditions he could have read in Philo. He knew that Moses had seen the vision of the six days of creation, and also that it had been his experience of rebirth.

> Then having taken him up into the mountain, he hid him in a cloud and took him out of all earthly things ... and he gave him a new birth as if he were a child in the womb ... and revealed to him all that he had done in making the world in six days, showing him in six other days the making of the world, performing in his presence the work of each day ... (Cosmas 3.13).

The ancient rituals of the holy of holies were remembered for centuries, and it was known that a human could become divine when he stood in the presence of God. He was reborn, presumably as Son of God, as Psalms 2 and 89 testify.

There are a few other glimpses in the Old Testament of rituals in the holy of holies. The last words of David describe him as a man who was raised on high, a word that can also mean resurrected, and anointed.[28] He then spoke the words of the LORD (2 Sam. 23.1–2). Psalm 89 gives a similar picture, albeit using different words. One chosen from the people was raised up and anointed, and the LORD promised to defeat his enemies. The king became 'the firstborn' and he called the LORD his Father. These are exactly the themes of Psalm 110, and must have been the kingmaking rites in the holy of holies. Resurrection, Sonship and Messiahship (i.e. anointing) were all elements of the same process. Since anointing with oil was a sacrament by which the Spirit was given, the kingmaking in the holy of holies is exactly what is described in the early Christian formula quoted by Paul. 'Descended from David according to the flesh' (as was the case with the ancient kings in Jerusalem) 'and designated Son of God in power by the Holy Spirit by his resurrection from the dead' (as was also the case with the ancient kings in Jerusalem) (Rom. 11.3–4). The king entered the place and state beyond the veil, and emerged again as the LORD with his people, Immanuel. *This process was not, however, a post-mortem resurrection.* People emerged from beyond the veil and lived in the outer world even though

they had already been transformed by access to the world beyond. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews knew that Melchizedek had been 'raised up' by the 'power of an indestructible life' (Heb. 7.11,16), in contrast to the priests of Aaron, who became so by the legal requirement of descent.[29]

There is in the Old Testament one description of the consecration of the high priest in the holy of holies in Zechariah 3. The prophet in his vision saw Joshua standing in before the Angel of the LORD, dressed in filthy garments. This probably means he was as yet unconsecrated and was still in his 'mortal' garments. The Angel commanded that the filthy garments be removed, and that Joshua be reclothed in rich apparel and a clean turban. He was promised the right of access to the holy place, the right to stand among the angels. Joshua received an engraved stone (the text is not clear) as a result of which the LORD would remove the guilt of the land. This must have been the signet with the Name, which the high priest wore on his forehead when he bore the sin of the people and their offerings (Exod. 28.38). If this was a consecration ritual, the high priest would then have emerged from the holy of holies, 'coming *with* the Name of the LORD.' 'With the Name' and 'in the Name' are identical in Hebrew, and it is quite possible that there was an acclamation 'Blessed is he who comes *with* the Name of the LORD'. He would have made the Name visible in the world, both by the engraved diadem that he wore and also by being himself the visible presence of the LORD. Hence the words of Jesus; 'I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world' (John 17.6), and 'Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming" because I said, "I am the Son of God"?' (John 10.36).

The richest source of information about the rituals of the holy of holies is the *Parables* of Enoch. These are a collection of visions, of uncertain date, but the later they are dated, the greater is the evidence that knowledge of the holy of holies survived. In the first vision (*1 En.* 37–42) Enoch sees the Chosen One under the wings of the LORD of Spirits (Enoch's name for the LORD of Hosts) and he sees a host of angels before the throne, and four 'presences' identified as the archangels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Phanuel. Enoch is then shown the secrets of the creation, and the first vision ends. In the second vision, he sees the Ancient of Days and a human figure with the face of an angel. Blood is brought before the LORD of Spirits, a clear reference to the Day of Atonement offering, and then the judgement begins. The next section describes how the human figure is 'named before the LORD of Spirits', named 'before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heavens were made' (*1 En.* 48.2–3). The text is somewhat disordered, but if the sequence here is original, it would show that the human figure who entered the holy of holies was given the Name after the blood had been offered on the Day of

Atonement. This would correspond exactly to the sequence in Philippians 2.8–9, which says the Servant humbled himself to death and was then exalted and given the Name above every name.

The relationship between the self offering of the high priest[30] and the rebirth/resurrection in the oneness of the holy of holies may well have been preserved in the Zohar, in the description of the ascent of the righteous souls. The souls of the righteous ascend and are met by the heavenly beings who

> take them on high and offer them up as an acceptable sacrifice to their Master. The Supreme chieftain of those legions bears the name Suriya ... and he takes them under his charge and passes them on higher until they arrive at the place of sacrifice. There all the souls are absorbed in the Supreme Point. As a woman conceives a child, so does the Supreme Point conceive them, experiencing a rapturous pleasure in absorbing in itself the souls with all their good deeds and Torah studies performed during the past day. The souls then re-emerge, that is to say, they are born anew, each soul being fresh and new as at its former birth. (Z. *Exod.* 213b)

Only the high priest was permitted to pass through the veil and to stand before the throne or, in the desert tradition, before the ark, and he was only permitted to do this once a year on the Day of Atonement. The words of Leviticus 16.2 could imply that at an earlier period, the high priest had entered more frequently: 'Tell your brother Aaron not to come at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the mercy seat which is upon the ark, lest he die.' Entering the holy of holies was a terrifying experience, because the LORD appeared to the high priest 'in the cloud upon the *kapporet*'. Before making the blood offering, the high priest took incense into the holy of holies, and this seems to have been a protection for him. 'Put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the *kapporet* which is upon the testimony, lest he die' (Lev. 16.13). In later texts, the high priest carries a 'fire pan' in to the holy of holies and places it before the ark. Then he puts the incense on to the charcoal, and fills the holy of holies with smoke (*m. Yoma* 5.1). Other texts, however, imply that there was a golden altar within the veil of the temple. The Letter to the Hebrews is clear; in the holy of holies stood the ark and the golden altar of incense (Heb. 9.3–4). The Hebrew text of 1 Kings 6.20–22, however, is not so clear, but could have described a golden altar within the veil. Unfortunately, the line, 'He covered with gold the altar that belonged to the holy of holies' (1 Kgs. 6.22), does not appear in the LXX, and the text of v. 20 is disordered. The Vulgate, which is quite clear that there was an altar within the veil, was translated at the end of the fourth century CE by Jerome, who would have known the Letter to the Hebrews and thus would have read the ambiguities of 1 Kings 6.20 in the light of the later Christian text. However the incense was actually offered, the tradition is clear that the high priest needed the incense as

protection when he entered the holy of holies, and that the incense used in the holy of holies was a special blend. It was deemed 'most holy', and anyone who used that blend outside the holy of holies was 'cut off from his people' (Exod. 30.34–38).

Entering the holy of holies with a cloud of incense is the temple reality that underlies the visions of the human figure entering heaven with clouds or of the LORD appearing in clouds upon the throne. Thus did Isaiah describe his call to prophesy: he saw the LORD enthroned in the temple, between the six-winged seraphim, and the house was filled with smoke (Isa. 6.1–4). Daniel saw a human figure 'one like a son of man' coming with clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7.13). When Luke described the Ascension, he said that Jesus was 'lifted up, and a cloud took him' (Acts 1.9). Jesus was passing beyond the veil, beyond the constraints of time and place. The men in white said that he would return in the same way. John introduced the Book of Revelation with the assurance, 'He is coming with the clouds' (Rev. 1.7), and John was granted his own vision of the LORD's return, which he recorded as the Mighty Angel coming from heaven wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head (Rev.10.1). Entering the holy of holies was entering heaven, and so these visions of a human figure going or coming with clouds must be understood in the temple setting of the high priest entering the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement.

Peter's sermon in Solomon's Portico shows that this was indeed how the early Church understood the departure of Jesus. He had gone to heaven as the great high priest, and would emerge again at the appointed time, that is, to bring renewal from the presence of the LORD. This is exactly what happened on the Day of Atonement,[31] sin was judged and the earth was then cleansed and healed for the New Year. Hence Peter's warning: 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out' (Acts 3.19–21). What had been ritualized annually in the Day of Atonement was happening in their own times through the self sacrifice of the great high priest Jesus. Jesus had passed through the veil into eternity; he was outside time and matter and so had passed into the eternal present, no longer limited by the particular time and place of first-century Palestine. This is the context, too, of the words in the 'high priestly prayer' in John 17. Jesus knew that he was about to pass through the veil, that he was returning to Day One, i.e. beyond and 'before' the creation. Thus: 'Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory I had with thee before the world was made' (John 17.5).

Resurrection

Those who passed beyond the veil became wise, and those who had the gift of wisdom were more than merely mortal. When the wise woman

of Tekoa spoke to King David she reminded him: 'My LORD has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all things that are on the earth' (2 Sam. 14.20). That wisdom made one like an angel was proverbial, and so the serpent in Eden had spoken the truth when he tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge: 'When you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God [or 'like the *'elohim'*, the angels], knowing good and evil' (Gen. 3.5). It was knowledge/wisdom that distinguished humans from angels, and those who passed through the veil into the place of the angels became wise. They had returned to Day One and so saw the unity of all things: they saw history as a whole, they saw the creation as a whole. Passing through the veil they left behind the world in which they could see change and decay all around them, and they entered the state beyond change. They were resurrected, and, having stood within the light of Day One, they were transformed and transfigured by it. Later Jewish mystics wrote of being burned up by the glory of the throne: 'Their strength fails, and their faces are charred, their hearts reel and their eyes grow dim at the splendour and radiance of their king's beauty'; 'Whoever beholds it ... his eye balls discharge fiery torches which burn him and consume him. For the very fire that springs out of the man beholding the garment burns him and consumes him.'[32] This imagery is familiar from the New Testament: when John saw the risen LORD, 'his eyes were like a flame of fire' (Rev. 1.14) and when the Word of God rode out from heaven on a white horse, his eyes were 'like flame of fire' (Rev. 19.12). The angel whom Daniel saw by the Tigris had 'eyes like flaming torches' (Dan. 10.6). The oldest biblical reference to this experience of standing before the fiery throne is in Isaiah, where the righteous one is assured that he will see the King, and that he will have the vision:

> 'Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire?
> Who among us can dwell with the everlasting burnings?'
> He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly ...
> Your eyes will see the king in his beauty,
> they will behold a land that stretches far. (Isa. 33.14, 17)

There are descriptions of fiery, transfigured beings throughout the Bible; some are described as angels, some not, but all must have been in the presence and emerged from beyond the veil. In other words, those whom we think of as 'human' but transfigured are already 'resurrected', already angels. When Moses came down from Sinai, his face shone and he had to wear a veil (Exod. 34.29–35). When Jesus was transfigured, his face was altered and his clothes became dazzling white (Luke 9.29). When the high priest came out of 'the house of the veil', i.e. when he emerged on the Day of Atonement, Ben Sira said that he made the court of the sanctuary glorious; he was like the morning star, like the

full moon, like the sun, like a rainbow gleaming among the clouds (*Ben Sira* 50.5–7, 11). When John described the Mighty Angel coming from heaven wrapped in a cloud, 'his face was like the sun and his legs like pillars of fire' (Rev. 10.1). The most remarkable of all the biblical descriptions of a fiery figure is also the oldest. Ezekiel saw enthroned 'the likeness of a human form', like gleaming bronze, like fire, 'like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain' (Ezek. 1.26–28).

Those who had been in the presence of that enthroned figure were themselves transfigured, and became like him. Thus Paul could write to the Corinthians: 'We all, with unveiled faces, beholding [or reflecting] the glory of the LORD, are being changed into his likeness, from one degree of glory to another' (2 Cor. 3.18). The saints are depicted with haloes, because they have been in the Presence and have been transfigured. There is a curious line in Ecclesiastes, which must have been a secular version of this belief: 'A man's wisdom makes his face shine' (Eccles. 8.1).

The Teachings

Everything behind the veil was only for the sons of Aaron, the high priests, which probably explains the Chronicler's interest in the veil and the chariot throne. 'All that concerns the altar and is within the veil' was for them alone 'and anyone else who comes near shall be put to death' (Num. 18.7, also LXX Num. 3.10). This is where the LORD appeared to the high priest (Lev. 16.2), where the LORD spoke to Moses (Exod. 25.22). The enigmatic words of Proverbs 30.1–4 were probably on the same subject, before the text became opaque. What can still be read tells of wisdom and knowledge of the holy ones, of one who has ascended to heaven and come down again, of one who has ordered the creation, and who has a 'name' and a son. Ascent to heaven, i.e. beyond the veil, knowledge, creation, sonship and the Name are all components of the secret tradition as it can be reconstructed in later texts.

These 'hidden things' were forbidden to others because they belonged to the LORD alone (Deut. 29.29). The laity had only to keep the revealed Law given to Moses. The opposition to the cult of the first temple which characterizes Deuteronomy is clear in this verse, as it is also in Deuteronomy 30.11–14[33] which emphasizes that the people did not need anyone to ascend into heaven to bring them teaching from the LORD. Presumably those whom the Deuteronomists opposed taught that someone did go up to 'heaven' to bring teaching from the LORD, and this tradition survives in the command to Moses to stand before the ark and hear the voice of the LORD (Exod. 25.22). Ben Sira, writing early in the second century BCE, had

also warned against the hidden things: 'Seek not what is too difficult for you, nor investigate what is beyond your power. Reflect on what has been assigned to you, for you do not need to know what is hidden' (*Ben Sira* 3.21–22).

The secret things continued to be forbidden, but the prohibition in the Mishnah (*m. Ḥagigah* 2.1) does not make clear the link between the various categories of forbidden things. *They were all the concerned with the holy of holies, and so must have been the secret tradition of the high priests.* The opening verses of Genesis, i.e. Day One, and Ezekiel's description of the throne chariot were forbidden for public reading and exposition; a teacher could confirm when a pupil had understood these things for himself, but he could not teach them. Similarly, it was forbidden to speculate or enquire about the four things: what is above, what is below, what was beforetime and what will be hereafter. In other words, it was forbidden to study the heavenly world or those overviews of past, present and future which characterized the apocalyptists' way of writing history. The fact that apocalyptic writings have survived that do deal with all these forbidden things – the throne, the beginning of the creation on Day One, and the overall pattern of history – show that the prohibitions of the Mishnah were not observed by everyone. The question is: who was preserving the 'hidden things' which had been forbidden at least since the 'reform' of Deuteronomy, and were still a cause of controversy when the Mishnah was compiled in the second century CE?

Jesus as the great high priest is a major theme in the New Testament and in the earliest Christian writings. Sometimes the emphasis is on his offering of the great atonement sacrifice, as in Hebrews 9.11–14, but sometimes the emphasis is on the great knowledge that the high priest revealed to his chosen disciples. In John's Gospel, the theme of high priesthood is implicit throughout. When accused of blasphemy, Jesus replied that 'gods', i.e. *'elohim*, are addressed in Psalm 82, and so his claim to be Son of God was not blasphemous. He was the one 'whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world' (John 10.36); he was the high priest, consecrated beyond the veil and then sent out into the world. Jesus spoke of what he knew: 'He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, and yet no one receives his testimony' (John 3.32). John was entrusted with that testimony, and it is recorded in the Book of Revelation: 'The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him to show to his servants what must soon take place' (Rev. 1.1). The great high priest continued to come back through the veil to speak to his prophet. In the opening vision, the 'one like a son of man' near the seven lamps, whom John recognized, was dressed as a high priest who had emerged from the holy of holies; he had the long robe and the golden girdle of the high priest, and he was barefoot. He gave messages to John to give to the angels of the churches.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, wrote at the beginning of the second century CE:, 'Our own high priest is greater [than the ancient high priests], for he has been entrusted with the holy of holies,'[34] and to him alone are the secret things of God committed' (*Philadelphians* 9). Ignatius claimed to have knowledge of 'high and heavenly topics' that were beyond the comprehension of those new to the faith. He knew about 'celestial secrets and angelic hierarchies and the dispositions of the heavenly powers and much else both seen and unseen ...' (Trallians 5). These must have been the secrets of Day One, but there is nothing of this in the New Testament. At the end of the second century CE, Irenaeus compiled his *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, which he described as a manual of essential Christian teaching. The first major topic on his list of essential Christian teachings was a description of the seven heavens, the angelic powers and archangels, and the relationship between the cherubim and seraphim to the Word and the Wisdom of God (*Dem.* 9). None of this is in the New Testament, although it may have been what Ignatius knew. But where had they learned all this? From Jesus the great high priest as they claimed?

Clement of Alexandria, writing at the end of the second century CE, distinguished his true teaching from that of people who were making 'a perverse use of divine words ... They do not enter in as we enter in, through the tradition of the LORD by *drawing aside the curtain'* (*Miscellanies* 7.17). Earlier in this work, Clement had defined Wisdom as 'a certain knowledge, being a sure and irrefragable apprehension of things divine and human, comprehending the present, past and future, which the LORD has taught us, both by his advent and by the prophets' (*Misc.* 6.7). Origen, writing for the next generation, knew of an unwritten tradition which had been handed down from the time of the prophets. 'Jesus, who was greater than all these, conversed with his disciples in private, and especially in their secret retreats concerning the gospel of God, but the words which he uttered have not been preserved because it appeared to the evangelists that they could not be adequately conveyed to the multitude in writing or speech' (*Celsus* 6.6). Jesus, he said, 'beheld these weighty secrets and made them known to a few' (*Celsus* 3.37). There had been 'doctrines spoken in private to his genuine disciples' (*Celsus* 3.60).

This high priestly teaching about heavenly secrets had been given after the resurrection. Clement of Alexandria, in a lost work quoted by Eusebius, wrote: 'James the Righteous, John and Peter were entrusted by the LORD after his resurrection with the higher knowledge. They imparted it to the other apostles, and the other apostles to the seventy, one of whom was Barnabas' (*Hypotyposes*, in Eusebius, *Church History* 2.1). Origen too taught that Jesus had given the higher teaching after his passion and resurrection (*Celsus* 2.2). This could be taken at face value, that there was a great deal of teaching given after the Easter event, and

that none of this has been recorded. There are hints, however, that this teaching was given during the ministry: 'When he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve, asked him concerning the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of heaven, but for those outside, everything is in parables ..." ' (Mark 4.10–11). If this private teaching was given during the ministry, then the 'resurrection' must have been an experience which preceded the crucifixion and was confirmed after it by the Easter miracle. Passing through the veil, an experience which John attributed to Jesus when he described his own consecration as the high priest, *must have been Jesus' own experience of resurrection.*

Pre-Christian apocalyptic writings that revealed the secrets beyond the veil were transmitted and preserved only by Christian scribes; they were forbidden to the Jews, and R. Akiba, at the end of the first century CE, taught that anyone who read 'the outside books' would have no place in the world to come (*m. Sanhedrin* 10.1). But, as we have seen, he had known one of the visions himself, as had his contemporary R. Nehunyah. The *Gospel of Philip* confirms that Christians knew this imagery.[35] The secret things beyond the veil were thus known to both faiths, but the one tried to keep them secret, while the other celebrated the fact that their high priest had revealed to them the secret things from beyond the curtain, the true teaching.[36]

How old, then, is this imagery of the veil which separates the visible from the invisible creation? Where this imagery occurs in Christian texts, it is usually identified as the influence of Platonism, but the evidence suggests that the roots are earlier than Plato. Everything depends, of course, on the dates assigned to the texts of the Hebrew Bible, but the correspondence of above and below must have been known to the compiler of the Pentateuch, since Moses was commanded to copy in the tabernacle what he had seen on Sinai (Exod. 25.9, 40). Even the fragmented state of the text permits us to see the residual correspondence between the first four days of creation and the first four stages of assembling the tabernacle at the New Year (Exod. 40.17–24). Such fragmentation (complicated by the question of the bronze laver which is not in the LXX, and the golden altar of incense which was clearly an insertion into the account of the tabernacle [Exod. 30.1–10; it belongs logically in Exod. 25]) indicates a pre-Pentateuchal date for the linking of creation and temple building. Moses' vision on Sinai was probably the vision of the days of creation which now forms the preface to the Books of Moses in Genesis 1. The belief that the veil separated Day One from the rest of creation was probably pre-exilic, and the composition of the veil with four colours woven together is likely to have had some significance. *This would explain why the account of Solomon's temple in 1 Kings 6 does not mention the veil.* It was the key element in the older temple cult which

the Deuteronomists claimed to have reformed. Even though the evidence for the symbolism of the four colours as the four elements is known only from the end of the second temple period, earlier texts make much more sense if read in the light of this 'later' evidence. In other words, the tradition as recorded by Josephus and Philo was probably ancient, and not necessarily proof of Platonic influence.

10

WISDOM, THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN[1]

We are all too familiar with the process of trying to describe the God of Israel. The canonical texts are scrutinized for every possible clue, and the various names by which the God of Israel was known are deemed to indicate a particular author or period. Works of breathtaking complexity have been constructed. A plural form is deemed to be a singular, a plural of majesty, and so on. When archaeologists uncover figurines or plaques of male deities, they are identified as the gods of Canaan. Nobody would dream of trying to reconstruct the God of Israel simply from the finds of archaeologists. In fact, until very recently, the Hebrew Scriptures were used as the grid into which all archaeological finds had to be fitted. There had been no images in Israel, we were told, so one could safely argue from silence on that front, and there was a defined canon of evidence from which to make any necessary reconstruction. Thus was Old Testament history written and thus was Old Testament theology born, the child of several fathers, many German, mostly Protestant.

But that same canon of evidence tells us that there *had* been images at the very heart of the tabernacle and the temple: two golden cherubs. And on the very first page of most English translations of the Old Testament we read: God (a plural form) created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Gen. 1.27). Without embarking on the fascinating history of the interpretation of this extraordinary verse, let us ponder its implications. God was such that the image of God in human terms had to be both male and female. God was not necessarily two, but needed two forms for the divinity to be expressed in human terms. In other words, the divinity was as much male as female, in so far as no gendered words can ever be appropriate to describe what is beyond the material world of life and death and human reproduction. Centuries later, when a baptized Christian was deemed to have become a part of the body of the heavenly LORD, it was emphasized: 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female' (Gal. 3.28). Thus God-as-male-and-female was not an ancient and obscure teaching that passed into irrelevance; it appeared at the heart of Christian teaching.

What has happened to the female aspect of the God of Israel? Where is the Lost Lady? Who was the Sun of Righteousness who was to rise with healing in her wings (Mal. 4.2). She is usually translated out of the text, either as 'its wings', or, worse, 'his wings'.[2] A winged sun is one of the commonest symbols in the royal iconography of the ancient near east.

Recent decades have seen a flurry of activity to try to reconstruct the Lost Lady, and a whole new method of recovering Israel's older religion has been developed.[3] It begins with the evidence of figurines and graffiti,[4] and matches this to the evidence of texts, mainly from Ugarit, to provide an outline of the Goddess. The evidence from Ugarit shows that there had been a solar deity there, Athirat, and together with Raḥmay,[5] she formed Shapsh.[6] She was the Great Lady,[7] Rabitu, the mother of the seventy sons of El, i.e. she was the consort of the high god who was depicted as a bull and some texts suggest that she interceded with him on behalf of the other gods (KTU 1.44.iii 25–36). (Bovine imagery was common in the Ugaritic texts, Anat being the cow of Baal (KTU 1.13.v.30)). She was the Bright One (KTU 1.1.iii.20), the Lamp of the gods (KTU 1.4.viii.22–24), Great Lady Sun (KTU 1.16.i.36).[8] The consort of El in her double aspect gave birth to the royal child who also had a double aspect, and was known as Shaḥar and Shalem, the morning star and the evening star (KTU 1 23.v.50–54). She was the 'nursing mother' of the human king, yet still had the title the Virgin (KTU 1.15.ii.26–28). No figurine or other representation of Athirat has been found, but the winged sun disc over the head of the king seems to represent her, showing her role as his mother.[9] She also carried a spindle (KTU 1.4.iii.15).[10]

The Ugaritic name Athirat could correspond to the Hebrew *asherah*, a word found in the Hebrew Scriptures, which apparently meant a forbidden cult object in the form of a tree. Translations of the Bible made before the Ugaritic texts were discovered have: 'Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God' (AV, Deut. 16.21), and describe Jezebel's '400 prophets of the groves' (AV, 1 Kgs 18.19). Now that Asherah is known to be very similar to the name of a goddess, these passages have to be understood differently. Jezebel had prophets of the goddess. At the end of the second temple period, an *'asherah* was remembered as an idolatrous tree symbol (*m. 'Aboda Zarah* 3.7) which could have been planted for the purpose, or have been trimmed into a special shape, or have had an idol set beneath it. It seems to have been a topic of current concern; in other words, these sacred trees were still a threat in the period of Christian origins. It must also be significant that Juvenal, at the same period, when he satirized a Jewish fortune teller, described her as 'an interpreter of the laws of Jerusalem, a high priestess of the tree, a trusty go-between of highest heaven' (*Satire* 6. 543–45).[11]

The meaning of the Ugaritic name Athirat is disputed: in the form *athirat yam* it may have been 'the lady who treads the sea/sea dragon' (interesting in the light of Rev. 12.1–3 where the Woman clothed with the sun appears with the dragon at her feet).[12] Or perhaps the name Athirat meant 'sanctuary', since Ugaritic 'Qudshu', holy one/holy place, is one of her names.[13] This, too, could be interesting in the light

of Isaiah's usage, where Holy One is one of the names of the Jerusalem deity,[14] and in the Book of Revelation, the Bride of the Lamb is clearly the sanctuary, the holy of holies (Rev. 21.9,16).[15] The spelling of the name is also a problem, since all the archaeological evidence in Hebrew spells the name differently: not Asherah but Asheratah. It has become the custom to translate this form as 'his *'asherah*, meaning Yahweh's Asherah, in other words his consort or his wooden cult object. Not all the examples, however, have Yahweh preceding them, and so 'his' *'asherah* is unlikely as the translation.[16] If all the examples outside the Hebrew Scriptures spell the name Asheratah,[17] this raises an interesting possibility. Ancient scribes are known to have altered the name of anything they found offensive, and so the two different forms of the name could indicate a later condemnation of the deity Asheratah so that she was remembered simply as an idolatrous tree or pole.[18]

The inscriptions at Kuntillet 'Ajrud are of special interest, especially graffiti on broken pieces of two large storage jars found there, which seem to read: 'I bless you by *yhwh* of Samaria and by *'šrth* (Davies 8.017), and 'I bless you by *yhwh* of Teman and by *'šrth* (Davies 8.021). The former is accompanied by a rough drawing of three figures, although there is no proof the three figures relate to the two deities mentioned. Two of the figures are humanoid figures with bovine heads, a male and a female, and these have been variously explained. The most obvious explanation is that they were the golden calves who represented the deities of Israel. We tend to imagine the golden calves as life-like representations of the young animal, but these strange humanoids may have been how they were actually made. Ezekiel described similar creatures in his vision of the throne: they had human form with straight legs and bovine feet, four wings, and heads of a lion, an eagle, a human and an ox (Ezek. 1.5–10). This inscription refers to *yhwh* of Samaria, and Hosea testifies that there were calves (feminine plural) there at Beth Aven, the House of Shame.[19] The calves were actually at Beth El, the House of God. 'A man made it, it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces' (Hos. 8.5–6). When Jereboam set up shrines to rival Jerusalem as centres of worship, he made golden calves and set them at Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs 12.28–29), and there he offered sacrifices to the calves (1 Kgs 12.32). Why attempt to rival Jerusalem in this way? When Jehu wiped out the cult of Baal he did not destroy the calves (2 Kgs 10.28-29), and Solomon had the head of a calf on his throne in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 10.19). Since this is elsewhere described as the throne of the LORD (1 Chron. 29.23), the calf must have been an important symbol in the royal cult in Jerusalem. The two humanoids with bovine heads were probably *yhwh* and *'šrth, animals representing deities as does the Lamb in Christian art.*

There is also the curious form of the inscriptions to consider: 'Yahweh of Samaria and Asheratah' (Davies 8.017) and 'Yahweh of

Teman and Asheratah' (Davies 8.021) imply that Asheratah was a constant, and the Yahweh associated with her was defined by a particular location. The presuppositions of modern scholarship invariably show themselves at this point: Teman probably means just the southern region because it is unlikely that Yahweh was worshipped in Teman,[20] and 'It seems as though the references to the Asherah of Yahweh are geographically bound.'[21] What the inscriptions actually imply is that there was one Asheratah who was presented with more than one Yahweh, who was worshipped in Teman and in Samaria. As at Ugarit, where Athirat was the mother of the sons of El, the Asheratah of the inscriptions was not the consort of Yahweh but his mother in each of his local manifestations, all of whom were eventually recognized as 'One Yahweh' (Deut. 6.4).

She was the mother of Yahweh in Jerusalem who was the king, Immanuel, which is why the Lady was venerated by the queen mother in the court of Judah. We are told little about the great ladies of the court in Jerusalem, but information about one of them, Maacah the daughter of Abishalom, is very interesting indeed. She set up an abominable thing for Asherah (or 'as Asherah'), and she was the mother of two kings, Abijam and Asa, who were themselves father and son. In other words, Abijam must have had as his consort his own mother, the woman who venerated Asherah (1 Kgs 15.1–13). 'Your sons shall marry you' had been Isaiah's promise to Jerusalem (Isa. 62.5) and the mother of the Messiah in Revelation 12 was also the Bride of the Lamb (Rev. 19.7; 21.9–14). This Oedipal arrangement was known to Philo, who described Wisdom as the wife of each of the patriarchs in turn.[22]

There are far more problems recovering the Lady than with other aspects of Old Testament study. The first problem is that the primary sources in the Hebrew Scriptures were transmitted for the most part by the heirs of the Deuteronomists, and so the Lady has disappeared or survived only as an abomination. Only in the Hebrew sources is she paired with Baal, which is thought to be the Deuteronomists' polemic,[23] and there are several instances in the Hebrew text where her presence can still be discerned despite the pointing and the alteration of a letter here and there.[24] The word for 'terebinth' *'elah*, is identical in form with what would have been the word for goddess, had such a thing been acknowledged, i.e. the feminine of *'el*. The consonants of Joshua 24.26, 'He took a great stone and set it up there *under the oak* in the sanctuary of the LORD' could also be read 'He took a great stone and set it up *instead of the goddess* in the sanctuary of the LORD'. The consonants *tht h'lh* can be read either way, and here, where the context is exclusive loyalty to the LORD, an incident where the goddess was replaced by the 'the book of the law of God' makes good sense. Wisdom poetry was also reworked as the praises of the Law,[25] and the Deuteronomists declared that their Law was to replace Wisdom

(Deut. 4.6). There is also the 'archaic' word for God, *'eloah*, which also looks like a feminine form, and occurs most frequently in Job. Job also has the most instances of Shaddai, another of the Lady's names, and is a Wisdom text set in the north of Arabia, where the priests of the first temple settled after they had defected to the Babylonians.[26] Ezekiel apparently saw her image in the temple, described in MT as *sml hqn'h hmqnh*, 'the image of jealousy which provokes to jealousy', but perhaps originally *sml hqnh hmqnh*, the image of the Creatrix who gives life, like Athirat's title in Ugaritic texts: *qnyt Creatrix* (e.g. KTU 1.4.i.23).[27]

The second of the problems is that when the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was formed after the destruction of the second temple, the key texts for the Lady, such as *Ben Sira*, were not included. They only survived through transmission in the Greek Scriptures that were adopted by the Church. The third problem is that when Protestant scholars in Europe began to translate the Scriptures into the vernacular, they adopted the Hebrew canon, and thus excluded the Lady yet again.[28] Since it was largely Protestant scholars who developed modern critical study of the Bible, they worked with a canon that did not include the Lady, a Hebrew text that had obscured her, and an innate suspicion of anything that smacked of Rome and Mary. Thus the Lady became the Lost Lady.

It is an interesting exercise to try to recover the Lost Lady using the same methods as are used to reconstruct the male aspect of the God of Israel:

1. By giving priority to the evidence of the Hebrew texts, including inscriptions. There is no exact parallel to the phrasing of the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions, which shows that biblical traditions are not representative of everything about Hebrew language and religion.[29]
2. By allowing for singular and plural forms, and for a variety of names for one figure, and for the undoubted practice of using a singular verb with a plural form for a divinity.
3. By admitting that if conceptions of the male aspect of the deity moved away from anthropomorphism, then the female must have had the same fate. There are unlikely to have been simultaneous movements away from anthropomorphism for the male but towards personification for the female.

It is also necessary to recognize that the texts that have been treated as 'history' were often a highly subjective and selective account of what happened. What the Deuteronomists presented as history was not the only 'history' of the monarchy, exile and restoration, and had the fathers of Old Testament theology and history not been latter day Deuteronomists, other voices might have been heard and other texts read.

Finally, there are the questions of paradigms and context. If we have

inherited the Deuteronomists' way of reading the Hebrew text, there is unlikely to be much progress in recovering what they sought to suppress, if their model is retained and further refined. A new paradigm alters everything, and its value cannot be assessed by the extent to which it agrees with, and is compatible with, the paradigm it seeks to supersede. *It has to be judged on the extent to which it offers an explanation of the evidence.* A hypothesis, even one that has been much used, is not transformed into fact merely by repetition. Context is another major consideration: the context within the Hebrew text, within the versions, within related traditions, and within the beliefs of the heirs of those traditions, whom we cannot simply assume to have been mistaken about their own cultural heritage. What Goldsmith wrote in the context of ecology is relevant here:

> To understand something is to determine its function within a larger spatio-temporal system. This means that widening the context in which we study it will increase our knowledge of its function. This is how a detective tries to understand a crime. ... *The clue in isolation from its context cannot be interpreted, for it has no meaning and constitutes data not information.*[30]

The Lady in Egypt

The clearest written evidence for the Lost Lady is found in Jeremiah 44, where the prophet tried to convince refugees in Egypt that the recent destruction of Jerusalem had been punishment for their sins, burning incense to other gods. The refugees would have none of it. The reason for the disaster, they said, was that they had abandoned the worship of the Queen of Heaven. They had stopped burning incense, pouring libations and making loaves ('cakes')[31] to depict her (*'ṣb*, whence the Hebrew word for an idol),[32] a long-established practice in Jerusalem and Judah (Jer. 44.16–19; cf. Jer. 7.18). When she had been honoured, they had prospered, but since she had been abandoned there had been nothing but disaster. Refugees from Jerusalem who settled in Egypt were accustomed to worship the Queen of Heaven who protected Jerusalem and Judah, and they used libations, incense and moulded loaves. It is interesting that the Yeb (Elephantine) papyri found in the south of Egypt depict a community with Judaean roots, who offered only cereals, incense and libations at their temple and had female names among their divinities. It was the subsequent *introduction* of animal sacrifice that caused local unrest, and they were permitted to resume only their bloodless offerings.[33]

We now draw on a text in neither the Greek nor the Hebrew canon, but which seems, from the surviving fragments, to have been one of the most important texts at Qumran.[34] *1 Enoch* has a very different account of the history of Jerusalem and Judah, and regards as a disaster the

changes made in the temple just before the destruction of Jerusalem, changes which are presented by ancient and modern Deuteronomists as a 'reform of the temple'. *1 Enoch* tells the story of this period from the same point of view as the refugees in Jeremiah 44. Just before the temple was burned all who lived there *became blind and forsook Wisdom* (*1 En.* 93.8). The Enochic history at this point and elsewhere (*1 En.* 89.73) goes on to condemn the second temple as impure and calls those who built it 'an apostate generation'. The Enoch tradition implies that it remained true to the ways of the first temple, that the rejection of the deity whom the refugees called the Queen of Heaven was the rejection of Wisdom, and that her role had been to give 'sight' to those in the temple, the priests. Elsewhere in *1 Enoch* there is a fragment of poetry which tells how Wisdom found no place to dwell on earth and so returned to her place among the angels. Unrighteousness, however, did find a place to dwell (*1 En.* 42). This is the familiar contrast between two female figures; the good rejected, but the bad accepted and welcomed.

This situation is the setting for the opening chapters of Proverbs. Wisdom speaks to her children and warns them against the ways of the foreign woman who has forgotten the covenant of her God (Prov. 2.16–17). The foreign woman must be the genius of the restored Jerusalem. When Wisdom calls out to her children, she calls from outside the city. Proverbs 1.20–21 is not a clear text, but could be read as 'Wisdom calls outside [the city] ... she raises her voice in the open spaces, ... and at the entrance to the city gates.' She warns those who hate knowledge and she promises those who repent that they will receive the gift of her Spirit which will enable them to understand her words. Proverbs 1.23 is literally 'I will pour out my Spirit on you', although the English versions are shy of this. Wisdom speaks with authority as the Guardian of her city: 'You have ignored all my counsel. ... I will laugh at your calamity. ... When distress and anguish come ... then they will call upon me but I will not answer' (Prov. 1.24–28). These are the words of a deity. Her name here and elsewhere is a plural form 'Wisdoms' (Prov. 1.20; 9.1), and it was suggested long ago by Albright that this indicated the name of a female deity. This is a plural form with a singular verb, just like the usage with *'elohim*.[35]

A glimpse at the work of the various temple reformers shows what they had destroyed. Hezekiah had removed a bronze serpent to which people had offered incense, and he had cut down Asherah (2 Kgs 18.4). Josiah utterly destroyed objects in the temple for the cult of Asherah, Baal and the heavenly host (2 Kgs 23.4–14). He removed priests from the high places who had been appointed to burn incense, as well as those who burned incense to Baal, the sun, moon and stars and the heavenly host. He broke down the houses of the holy ones[36] in the temple, where the women wove linen garments for Asherah.[37] Josiah

also put an end to child sacrifice, removed the signs of a sun cult, and removed rooftop altars. If all these had links to the cult of the Lady, her cult must have involved a serpent and a tree symbol, the Asherah, the heavenly host (who were her sons), child sacrifice such as was forbidden by the story of Abraham and Isaac,[38] a sun cult and linen garments. The Great Lady of Ugarit, the Virgin Mother of the gods, had been the sun goddess Shapsh in one of her aspects as Athirat, and in the other as Raḥmay, meaning womb. She had been the mother of the king.[39] Her winged sun symbol must have been the Sun of Righteousness whom Malachi promised would rise on the faithful and heal them (Mal. 4.2, 3.20 in the Heb.). She must have been the one who appeared when the LORD came from Sinai, with his host of holy ones, and with an 'uncertain word' at his right hand (Deut. 33.2). The impossible consonants are *'šdt*, and, given that *d* and *r* are very similar in Hebrew, must once have been the name of the Lady *'šrt*, Asherata. This must have been the LORD appearing with his holy ones and with the Queen, as in Revelation 19–21.

Wisdom appears in later texts which may, or may not, preserve accurate memories of the Queen of Heaven. We must judge by the consistency between sources, rather than bringing scholarly preconceptions to the later evidence. Ben Sira gave a remarkable description of Wisdom, presumably as she was known in the early years of the second century BCE in Judah. She stood in the heavenly assembly, she was present at the creation, she was enthroned on a high pillar of cloud, she was allotted Israel as her inheritance, she served God Most High in the temple on Zion, her symbol was a huge fragrant tree, she *was* the anointing oil kept specially for the high priests (olive oil, choice myrrh and cinnamon[40]), she fed her devotees and they hungered for more, she was compared to the rivers flowing from Eden to water the earth, and her teaching was like the light of the dawn (*Ben Sira* 24.25–33).[41] She was, then, amongst other things, an angel priest figure, the patroness of Zion. This text was translated into Greek and used by the Egyptian community. We cannot assume that they translated this text into Greek because it was a novelty and a departure from their ancient faith.

The *Wisdom of Solomon* is thought to have originated in this same Egyptian community, and therefore from the heirs of those who took the Queen with them when they fled as refugees.[42] Wisdom here is depicted as radiant and unfading (6.12), more precious than silver and gold (7.7–10), the fashioner of all things who gave knowledge of all things to Solomon (7.22). She is an emanation of the Glory, she passes into all things and renews them, she is superior to ordinary light, she reaches to the very ends of the earth and orders all things well (7.22–30).[43] She is radiant with the Glory of God, allows nothing unclean to enter, stretches a vast distance, and needs no light of sun or moon.

From her flows the river of life and within her is the tree of life. Here is a female figure who is both consort and city, which is how she appears in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 21.9–27).[44]

The *Wisdom of Solomon* has more information about her. Solomon sought her as his bride (9.2), she gave him immortality (8.13), she sat by the throne of the LORD in heaven (9.10), and was also known as the Holy Spirit (9.17). Most remarkable of all is the summary of the early history: Wisdom had protected Adam and guided Noah, strengthened Abraham and delivered Joseph. It was Wisdom, not the LORD, who led Israel out of Egypt. Here was a writer from the end of the second temple period who could describe the God of Israel as male and female, and could summarize the sacred history of his people as the story of the Lady's care for them (*Wisd.* 10.1–11.14).

Philo, too, used images of the Lady, and not all of them were drawn from texts such as *Ben Sira* and *Wisdom*. He had another source, and, since he was chosen to represent his community before the emperor in Rome, his teaching must have been acceptable to them. Philo knew of a divine couple who had been parents of the King, and he adapted this image to describe the creation (*On Drunkenness* 30).[45] God was 'the husband of Wisdom' (*Cherubim* 49), and the Logos was the son of 'Wisdom his mother, through whom [fem.] the universe came into being' (*Flight* 109). Wisdom was 'the first born mother of all things' (*On Gen.* 4.97). He presented the story of the patriarchs and their wives as a complex allegory, in which the wife of each patriarch in turn was Wisdom. Sarah was the motherless Wisdom (*On Gen.* 4.145), Rebecca was also Wisdom (*On Gen.* 4.146), so he sees the matriarchs as Wisdom, the eternal wife and mother, perhaps an echo of the ancient Wisdom who has been both mother and consort of the ancient kings. Philo described both Wisdom and Logos in the same way: 'The heavenly Wisdom is of many names ... beginning and image and vision of God' (*All. Int.* 1.43). There is a similar picture of Wisdom in the fragments of Jewish Liturgy embedded in the *Apostolic Constitutions*: God is the Father of Wisdom (7.35.10) and it was to Wisdom God spoke when he said 'Let us make man after our image' (7.34.6). *This implies two Wisdoms*, as in the later Kabbalistic tetrad, which comprised Father-Mother and Son-Daughter.[46] The eternal Wisdom in all her aspects as the mother, the consort and the female aspect of the divinity appears in the *Gospel of Philip*: 'There were three who always walked with the LORD: Mary his mother, and her sister, and Magdalene, the one who was called his companion. His sister, his mother and his companion were each a Mary' (CG II.3.59).

1 Enoch has a slightly different picture; Wisdom did not stay in Zion but returned to heaven, doubtless a comment on the legitimacy of the current high priesthood in Jerusalem. She had a place by the heavenly throne (*1 En.* 84.3), and when Enoch received Wisdom he received

eternal life and became one of the resurrected (*1 En.* 37.3–4). Fountains of Wisdom flowed around the throne, and the thirsty could drink to fill themselves with Wisdom (cf. Rev. 22.17). Wisdom would be given to the Chosen as a sign of the last times and they would be resurrected (*1 En.* 91.10). On his heavenly journey, Enoch saw a huge fragrant tree whose fruit gave Wisdom (*1 En.* 32.3) and on an earlier journey he had seen the tree of life whose fruit was for the chosen ones after the judgement (*1 En.* 24.4–25.6). Although these *Enoch* texts are from many periods, they have a consistent picture of Wisdom and her symbols which is at variance with the Eden story in Genesis, but consistent with the Book of Revelation.

The Lady, as she was remembered in the imagery of later texts, was symbolized by a tree and by water. She had a throne, she was the Queen of Heaven, she was both mother and consort of the kings, but also the consort of the LORD, she gave eternal life/resurrection, she fed her devotees, she was radiant, superior to earthly light, she was the mother of all creation, she was the anointing oil, she was the archetypal angel high priest, she was the genius of Jerusalem and its protectress. She had been abandoned just before the first temple was destroyed, and some of her devotees had fled to Egypt.

The Queen in Isaiah

Isaiah was a court prophet in Jerusalem at the time when the Lady was struggling to keep a place in her city. We should expect to find traces of her in his book. Restricting the enquiry to the earliest strata of the much reworked Isaiah corpus, the first thing which becomes clear is that Isaiah did not work within a framework of the Moses/Exodus traditions but of the *Enoch* mythology and the fallen angels. 'Sons have I reared and they have rebelled against me' (Isa. 1.2).[47] His characteristic title for the deity is the Holy One, one of the titles for the goddess at Ugarit, and he has no word of condemnation for Ahaz, who offered his son as a sacrifice (2 Kgs 16.3).[48] There are also several passages where the text is far from clear, but in a context which invites investigation and speculation. Context is all important.

In his temple vision, Isaiah saw the LORD and felt his guilt removed; it was an atonement experience. The sin of which he was conscious was false teaching, 'unclean lips', and there was an ancient understanding of his cry as: 'Woe is me, for I kept silent' (Isa. 6.5).[49] What false teaching? The only evidence within the Isaiah corpus is that he initially condemned the reform of Hezekiah, who had removed the Asherah, the high places and the pillars (2 Kgs 18.4). Although this was long after the temple vision, it indicates where Isaiah's sympathies lay. Uzziah, at whose death Isaiah had felt his guilt most acutely, had been in conflict with the temple priesthood (2 Chron. 26.16–21), but he had not

destroyed the high places (2 Kgs 15.4). The message which Isaiah had to deliver to the people was to hear but not understand, to see but not perceive, so that they could not turn and be healed (Isa. 6.10).[50] These are difficult words, but had the context been the rejection of Wisdom, they would make sense. According to Enoch, the rejection of Wisdom led to 'blindness', the loss of spiritual perception, and the opening words of Proverbs show that the two concepts which are the key to Isaiah's message – 'understanding' *biynah*, and perception/knowledge *da'at* – were also the fundamentals of Wisdom teaching (Prov.1.2: to know, *da'at*, wisdom and instruction, and to understand, *habiyn* words of insight, *biynah*).[51] The punishment Isaiah had to announce was the effect of the rejection of Wisdom, which would best make sense if Wisdom had in fact been rejected.

Isaiah asked how long this state was to continue, and the words of the reply, though opaque, are very interesting. 'Until ... the forsaken[52] places are many in the midst of the land', v. 12b, can be read as: 'Until ... great is the Deserted One in the midst of the land', 'deserted one' being used elsewhere in the Isaiah corpus to describe the *forsaken* wife of the LORD (Isa. 54.6), the *forsaken* city depicted as an abandoned woman (Isa. 60.15), and as the name which the restored city/bride is to use no more (Isa. 62.4). Her land is no more to be called Desolate, *shemamah,* exactly as in Isaiah 6.11b, and the passage concludes: 'Your sons shall marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you' (Isa. 62.5). The Isaiah tradition seems to have understood the earlier oracle as a reference to the desolate land and the forsaken woman/city, the bride of the LORD who married her sons.

Isaiah 6.13 is another opaque text; the variety of translations offered indicates the extent of the problem. The AV offers: 'But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return and shall be eaten: as a teil tree and as an oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.' The NEB has: 'Even if a tenth part of its people remain there, they too will be exterminated [like an oak or a terebinth, a sacred pole thrown out of its place in a hill shrine].' Others are just as diverse. The tenth *'aśryh*, is a suggestive set of letters, being very similar to Asherah, 'like a terebinth and like an oak' is the tree symbolism of the Lady, and the holy seed surviving (an element omitted by the NEB) also indicates what the original oracle may have been. The ancient versions had similar problems. The Targum understood the tree as a symbol of the nation as a whole, eventually to be planted again in their land: 'And a tenth shall be left in it, and they shall be burnt up again, like a terebinth and like an oak which appear to be dried up when their leaves fall, though they still retain their moisture to preserve a seed from them: so the exiles of Israel shall be gathered together and shall return to their land; for a holy seed is their plant.' The LXX is brief: she will be devastated like a terebinth or oak that falls

from its place, and there is no mention of the holy seed. Symmachus has 'like an oak or acorn, which, when the leaves have been shed, stands alone. And her place is the holy seed.' The Vulgate is very different: the tenth will return (or be changed) and will be in appearance like a terebinth or an oak which spread out their branches, and the holy seed will be that which is within her'. The Qumran Isaiah has a slightly different text notably *mšlkt*, a feminine participle from šlk, 'throw, fling, cast', which would account for the shedding leaves or the spreading branches, instead of the MT *bšlkt*, which means 'in the felling of a tree', although, interestingly, this word in the MT is not known elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures, which could indicate that the Qumran text has the original. In addition, it is suggested that 'which' *'asher*, in v. 13b was probably *'asherah*,[53] giving 'like an terebinth or oak tree, *asherah* sheds her leaves/spreads for her branches . . .'.[54] The holy seed associated with the tree was clearly a sensitive matter, and the understanding of the seed as the restored people may well have been only a later interpretation. The evidence as a whole has to be set in a context. If the punishment coming upon the people was to suffer the loss of Wisdom, then the tree symbolism is likely to have been an allusion to the Lady, and the complex transmission history of these texts is evidence for the fate of her tradition.

The Lady's second appearance is in Isaiah's oracle to Ahaz at the upper pool (Isa. 7.10–14). The present form of the text, even in English, implies that something is missing. 'Therefore the Lord (*adonai*) himself will give you a sign' implies a distinction between the LORD (*yhwh*) whom Ahaz had refused to put to the test (v. 12), and the Lord (*adonai*). There was a similar distinction in the call vision. Isaiah saw the Lord (*adonai*) upon a throne, and he heard the voice of the Lord (*adonai*, Isa. 6.1, 8). The heavenly beings praised the LORD (*yhwh*), and Isaiah exclaimed that he had seen the King, the LORD (*yhwh*) of Hosts (Isa. 6.3, 5). In this chapter, the two names seem to be equivalents, as they are elsewhere, but in the oracle to Ahaz a distinction is implied: if you will not ask *yhwh*, then *adonai* himself will give you a sign. There is more than one deity in this passage. The matter is complicated by the text of Isaiah 7.11 in the great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran (1Q Isa[a]), which has: 'Ask a sign of the *mother* of the LORD (*yhwh*) your God', instead of 'Ask a sign from the LORD your God.' The photograph of the scroll is quite clear, although this reading is not reproduced in any transcript I have seen: *'wt m'm yhwh*, a sign from the mother of the LORD, instead of the MT *'wt m'm yhwh*, a sign from the LORD. The scroll has an *'aleph* not an *'ayin*, giving 'mother', rather than the stronger form of 'from'. This may have been just a mistake on the part of a careless scribe, but there is no proof of this. The Qumran Scroll is *the only pre-Christian Hebrew text of this section of Isaiah*, and it mentions the mother of *yhwh* in a very significant context; the sign of the child. Having read of the Abandoned

One in whom was the holy seed, we now have the mother of the LORD about to give birth to her son Immanuel.

The prophet's sign was that *the 'almah* (there is a definite article in the Hebrew even though the English translations do not reproduce it) would bear a son to be called Immanuel, 'God with Us'.[55] The king had this title (Isa. 8.8), because he was the divine presence with his people. Who, then, was his mother? There has been endless controversy over the fact that the LXX at this point translates *'almah* by *parthenos*, Virgin, whereas the later (post-Christian) Greek translations have *neanis*, young woman. Had the LXX, which became the Scriptures of the Church, been altered? Matthew certainly knew 'virgin' as the translation (Matt. 1.23, albeit *a* virgin) and yet *'almah* as known elsewhere means young woman. Why then did the translator of the LXX choose the other word? Perhaps it was because people in Egypt, where this translation originated, remembered the female figure in Jerusalem who had been known as the Virgin, just as the Great Lady in Ugarit had been the Virgin and the mother of the earthly king. She was the unnamed woman in the oracles of Micah, Isaiah's contemporary, the One who was about to give birth to the ruler and great shepherd of Israel (Mic. 5.2–4). Literally, *'almah* means 'the hidden one': the root *'lm* means conceal, and a derived noun, *t'lmh* means a secret, as in Job 11.6, 'the secrets of wisdom', or Job 28.11 'the thing that is hidden he brings to light'. When the woman clothed with the sun appears in the Book of Revelation, she had been hidden in the holy of holies which opened to reveal her and the long lost ark (Rev. 11.19–12.2).

The promised royal child then appears: 'Unto us a child is born' (Isa. 9.6), the 'us' being the angels in the holy of holies, since the nation is the third person 'they rejoice before thee' (Isa. 9.3). The setting for the naming of the royal child is the ritual/event celebrated in Psalm 110 (LXX 109), an opaque text in the Hebrew. The LXX, however, has in v.3b: 'In the splendour of the holy ones from the womb before the dawn I have begotten you.' 'Splendour' and 'mountains' are similar words in Hebrew, which explains why the Vulgate has 'in the holy mountains'.[56] The familiar English 'your youth' is one way of understanding the Hebrew letters *yldtyk*, but the other way is 'I have begotten you', whence the LXX. The remaining Hebrew gives 'from the womb', and 'from the morning star' and 'to you dew'. Although opaque in this form, they do make certain connections: one of the names for the Lady at Ugarit was Raḥmay, 'womb' and the Hebrew word here is the equivalent *rḥm*. Her son had a twofold name, Shaḥar, morning star, and Shalem, evening star, and the opaque Hebrew has the same word *shaḥar*. 'Morning star' was known to the first Christians as a title associated with the Davidic king, appearing in the letter to the Church at Thyatira together with allusions to Psalm 2, and it was a title for the risen LORD: 'I am the root and offspring of David, the bright

morning star' (Rev. 2.26–38; 22.16).[57] The remaining words of Psalm 110.3, 'to you dew' may once have described the process of the birth, since 'dew' became a symbol of resurrection, and the anointing oil which was the sacrament of resurrection was later described as 'like sweet dew and fragrant with myrrh' (*2 En.* 22.9). The king is born from his divine parents and given the title of the Son as well as the priesthood of Melchizedek. An early Christian Wisdom text, *The Teaching of Silvanus*, shows that this was remembered in the Church:

> Wisdom summons you in her goodness saying 'Come to me all of you' O foolish ones, that you may receive a gift, the understanding that is good and excellent. I am giving you a high priestly garment which is woven from every wisdom ... Return my son to your first Father God and Wisdom your Mother, from whom you came into being ... (CG VII.4.89, 91).

The birth in Isaiah 9 is this birth/anointing of the king, when he received the Spirit/Wisdom. Isaiah 9.6 then lists the names of the new king: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Some medieval Jewish scholars taught that the first three titles belonged to God, who named the child Prince of Peace.[58] There was clearly a sensitivity about describing the king as Mighty God. The Targum gave the titles as: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, He who lives for ever, and Messiah, but most remarkable is the LXX which renders all four titles by one: 'Angel of Great Counsel'. The divine son was the Wisdom Angel, a title which does not appear in the post-Christian Greek versions. One can understand why post-Christian versions reverted to a literal rendering of the Hebrew, but what might have prompted a translator in third- or second-century BCE Egypt to describe the royal child in this way unless the link to Psalm 110 was known and understood? The birth of the king had been his resurrection, his apotheosis.

The fourth text describes *the branch* growing from the stump, here the stump of the royal house, but the tree imagery persists. The Targum names him as the Messiah. The Spirit which rests upon him is the sevenfold Spirit of the LORD, with wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the LORD. Thus anointed, he restores right judgement, renews the harmony of the creation, and fills the earth with the knowledge of the LORD (Isa. 11.1–9). Jerome's commentary on this text quoted the account of Jesus' baptism in the (lost) *Gospel of the Hebrews*:

> According to the Gospel written in the Hebrew speech which the Nazarenes read ... I find this written 'When the LORD was come up out of the water, the whole fount of the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon him and said to him: "My son, in all the prophets I was waiting for thee, that thou shouldest come and I might rest in thee. For thou art my rest, thou art my first begotten son that reignest for ever."'

Elsewhere in this *Gospel*, Jesus described the Holy Spirit as 'My Mother', and Jerome quoted this in commenting on Isaiah 11.9.[59]

These four passages in the earliest stratum of Isaiah reflect a crisis in the monarchy caused by the rejection of the Mother of the king. Peace and prosperity could be restored only through her. The royal child would be her child, the Angel of Great Counsel, and the Spirit would endow him with the gifts of her presence. The choice of words by the translator of the LXX shows that this was remembered well into the second temple period in Egypt, where the Queen of Heaven was venerated.

Reigning from the Tree

There had been at one time a version of Psalm 96.10 which read 'The LORD reigns from the tree.' Justin quotes this line in his debate with Trypho (*Trypho* 71), as an example of words which Jews had removed from the Scriptures by the middle of the second century CE, because they were significant for Christians.[60] The first century CE *Letter of Barnabas* hints at the idea: 'The royal realm of Jesus is founded on a tree' (*Barn.* 8). These additional words in Psalm 96 were known to several early Christian writers, but are not in any known Hebrew (although this verse has not been found at Qumran). There is, however, evidence elsewhere for the throne and the tree; one of the murals in the central area of the synagogue at Dura Europos shows a figure enthroned in a tree. Lower in the tree is the figure of a lion, and standing under the tree a table on which is one of the curiously curved shewbread loaves. The figure is beyond doubt the Davidic king with the lion of Judah (Gen. 49.9; Rev. 5.5) and the table prepared for him (Ps. 23.5).[61] The tree of life was said to be the place where the LORD rested when he came into Paradise (*2 En.* 8.3; *Ap. Mos.* 22), and the tree of life, the river of life and the throne of God-and-the-Lamb (one figure, the human king after he had become the LORD)[62] are together in the holy of holies in John's final vision (Rev. 22.1–5). Had the words 'from the tree' been added to the psalm at some point, it would have been an appropriate addition even before the Christians began to describe the cross as the tree. On the other hand, had the words been removed, as Justin claimed, that is equally understandable. The tree of life was a point of contention between Christians and Jews, especially as renewed access to the tree was the promised reward for faithful Christians (Rev. 2.7; 22.14).

The great tree of life was a fragrant tree. Enoch saw it on his heavenly journeys, a great tree by the heavenly throne on the seventh mountain, a tree with 'a fragrance beyond all fragrance whose leaves and blossoms and wood never wither or rot' (*1 En.* 24.4). No mortal could touch the tree until the great judgement, when its fruit would be given to the chosen ones, and the tree itself would be transplanted to the temple in

Jerusalem (*1 En.* 25.5). The implication must be that the tree of life had been removed from the temple, presumably when the menorah/Asherah was banished. On another journey Enoch saw in a blessed place the flourishing and blooming sideshoots of a dismembered tree. (Thus *1 En.* 26.1 in the Gizeh Greek text. The Ethiopic is similar.) Presumably the tree had been badly damaged but was growing again. There is similar imagery in the Isaiah's first so-called Servant Song, where the fate of the servant is that of the broken menorah. 'A bruised reed he will not break, a dimly burning wick he will not quench' (Isa. 42.3) describes the menorah, 'reed' being also the term for the branches of the lamp (*qanim*, Exod. 25.32). With the verbs pointed differently, the line reads: 'A bruised reed he will not be broken, a spluttering wick he will not be put out, he will bring forth justice' in parallel to 'He will not burn dimly, he will not be put out, until he has established justice' (Isa. 42.4).[63] Here the branch of the menorah is symbolic of the Servant, the royal high priest, the Branch of the great tree.

On his heavenly journey, Enoch also saw the tree of wisdom, fragrant, and with fruit like grapes (*1 En.* 32.4), but in the Nag Hammadi text known as *On the Origin of the World*, this is how the tree of life is described: of immense height, coloured like the sun, with beautiful branches, leaves like a cypress and fruit like bunches of white grapes (CG II.5.110). *2 Enoch* also describes the tree of life as fiery: 'gold looking and crimson, with the form of fire' (*2 En.* 8.4). Now the tree of life was a symbol of Wisdom (Prov. 3.18),[64] but a *fiery* tree of life immediately brings to mind the menorah. Although no menorah is mentioned in the surviving descriptions of the first temple, Zechariah, speaking before the second temple had been built, described the golden seven-branched lamp which symbolized the divine presence, the eyes of the LORD (Zech. 4). It must have been his memory of the first temple, and of the significance of the seven-branched lamp in that temple. Nobody knows what Josiah and his predecessors removed from the temple when they took out the Asherah, but it is known that the seven-branched lamp was designed to be like a tree (Exod. 25.31–36),[65] and that it would be restored in the age of the Messiah (*Num. R.* XV.10). It must be more than coincidence that a tree-like object in the temple was remembered by Zechariah, was missing from the Deuteronomic accounts of the temple and from the lists of loot taken by the Babylonians, yet was of such importance that it would be restored in the time of the Messiah. The menorah and its significance were sensitive issues in the second temple period.[66]

There are even echoes in the Zohar:

> At the time when Israel is proclaiming the Unity [the mystery contained in the Shema] with a perfect intention, a light comes forth from the hidden supernal world which divides into seventy lights and those seventy lights into the seventy luminous branches

of the tree of life. The tree and all the other trees in the Garden of Eden emit sweet odours and praise their LORD for at that time the Matrona prepares herself to enter under the shade of the canopy, there to unite herself with her Spouse ...[67]

These lights and branches are the seventy sons of the Great Lady, the seventy sons of God.

The fiery tree which was the symbol of the Lady appears in the Pentateuch as the burning bush, where Moses was told to give the God of Israel a new name. It has long been recognised that the traditions of the patriarchs and the traditions of Moses were joined together in the story of the burning bush (Exod. 3.13–15). The point is emphasized later: 'I appeared to Abraham to Isaac and to Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name *yhwh* I did not make myself known to them, (Exod. 6.3). There are two changes here: the divinity is named *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, I AM WHAT I AM, and I AM (Exod. 3.14; perhaps 'I cause to be what I cause to be'), but an addition follows which in effect contradicts this. God *also* said 'Say this to the people of Israel ... *yhwh* ... has sent me, ... this is my name for ever and thus I am to be invoked'. Since *yhwh* is usually understood to mean 'He is', or 'He who causes to be', this distinction could imply a different understanding of the deity. The I AM becoming the HE IS could in fact mark the distinction between the deity as present, incarnate (in the king or high priest) and the deity as other, the distinction between the religion of Moses and the older religion of the temple.

This distinction survived into the earliest stratum of the Targums, where the distinctive I AM was represented by the *Memra*, usually translated 'Word'.

The evidence of [Targum Neofiti] and its glosses, we believe, allows us to observe a change and development in the meaning of *Memra* in the course of Targum tradition. Originally a term bearing a particular and distinctive theology of the Divine Name and Presence, it was used sparingly in carefully chosen contexts. To distinguish *Memra*, the Divine *'ehyeh* of God's self designation from the tetragram *yhwh*, the Name by which men address him, the formula 'Name of the *Memra'* was used, while the 'Voice of the *Memra*' indicated the active Divine presence in God's speech, commandments, and statutes. Similarly, when he acts by means of His *Memra*, God is there, actively present with men. *But at some point in the tradition, the content of Memra was lost; how or why we do not clearly know.*[68]

This incident of the burning bush records how the Lady was superseded by the deity whose name was associated with the Moses traditions, i.e. with the Deuteronomists, who 'reformed' the temple and transmitted the scriptures.[69] The older divinity had been both male and female (I AM being a gender free name in Hebrew), 'present' in the anointed ones,[70] and depicted as present in the creation in so far as she was beneath the firmament of heaven.[71] Thus the Lady was written out

of the Pentateuch, although she was remembered in the Targums and has probably left her mark in the curious forms of the pronoun which characterizes the Pentateuch. In all but eleven examples, 'she' (normally *hy'*) is written as 'he' (*hw'*), and so in an unpointed text gender distinctions are not clear.[72]

As El Shaddai she had bestowed fertility,[73] and in this role she appears in the Blessing of Moses: '... the best gifts of the earth and its fullness, the favour of the one who dwells in the bush' (Deut. 33.16). 'Bush' may not be the best translation, as the word only occurs in the Exodus passage and here, but the English translation 'him that dwelt in the bush' (thus RSV) may be inaccurate for other reasons also. The Hebrew has *šknỵ*, an archaic form of *škn*, dwell (whence Shekinah), with what could be an archaic feminine ending,[74] so the one who gave the best gifts of the earth may have been 'the Lady who dwelleth in the bush'.

As with any reconstruction, there can only be a balancing of probabilities. That the Lady was associated with the 'bush', *snh*, is strengthened by the wordplay with the similar sounding *śn'*, hate. By far the largest group listed among those who resettled Jerusalem were the sons of Şena'ah (Ezra 2.35 has 3,630; Neh. 7.38 has 3,930). The otherwise unknown name is thought to be an alternative spelling for 'the hated woman' or 'the rejected woman' (as in Deut. 21.15, the hated wife whose children could not be disinherited), but such a huge group could have been the sons of (i.e. devotees of) 'the woman of the bush'.

The Lady in the burning bush was known to the early Christians: when Justin was debating with Trypho, he explained that the Angel of the LORD who spoke in the flame from the bush was the 'Second Person', known by many names: the Holy Spirit, the Glory of the LORD, the Son, Wisdom, the Angel, the LORD and the Logos (*Trypho* 60–61). She also survived in Christian liturgy and iconography. Mary and her Child are depicted in the midst of the burning bush, surrounded by the angels of Day One, the fiery holy of holies. The explanation given is that, like the bush, Mary was not consumed by the Glory that was within her. 'Hail, Thou burning bush that remains unconsumed', 'The bush that burned with fire and yet remained unconsumed disclosed the secret mystery that shall come to pass in Thee'; 'Hail O Theotokos ... Hail, living Bush'.[75] The readings set for Great Vespers at the Annunciation are Exodus 3.1–8, the Burning Bush, and Proverbs 8.22–30, Wisdom the co-creator. There are ancient memories here of the Lady and her fiery tree, and of the One who gave birth in the holy of holies, in the glory of the holy ones (Ps. 110.3).

The Bread of the Presence[76]

Let us look now at the cult of the Queen of Heaven in the light of the fact that the Enoch tradition remembered her as Wisdom. *We read the*

two sets of information as complementary, superimposing the one on the other. The service of the Queen had been burning incense, pouring libations, and making 'cakes' to depict her (Jer. 44.18–19; 7.18),[77] exactly what was prescribed for the table of the shewbread (literally 'Bread of Presence') in the tabernacle, of which no more detail survives. On the golden table were to be set 'Plates and dishes for incense, flagons and bowls for libations, and the Bread of the Presence' (Exod. 25.29). No matter what image was on the special loaves baked in Judah and Jerusalem, they were intended to depict the Queen. It cannot, then, be coincidence, that the Shewbread also had to be baked in a special mould, although nobody, apparently, revealed what the mould was (*b. Menaḥoth* 94ab). The process of baking was the hereditary secret of the house of Garmu and they kept their secret (*m. Yoma* 3.11). The Bread of the Presence was the only cereal offering taken into the temple itself. The Mishnah records the process at the end of the second temple period, and describes two tables in the porch of the temple. 'On the table of marble they laid the Bread of Presence when it was brought in and on the table of gold when it was brought out since what is holy must be raised and not brought down' (*m. Menaḥoth* 11.7). From this we conclude that the bread had acquired holiness whilst it was in the temple, as it had to be kept on gold when it was brought out. It had acquired holiness whilst in the temple and become the most holy portion for the high priests (later, for all the priests, Lev. 24.9; *m. Men.* 11.7). 'Most holy' meant that it imparted holiness to those who consumed or touched it.[78] T. Onkelos here described the Bread of the Presence as the most sacred of the offerings. The Bread of the Presence was therefore the means by which the priests were fed holiness.

What, then did Bread of the Presence mean? It is likely that the Presence came to the bread whilst it was in the temple and thus made it most holy to feed the priests. The Bread of the Presence, like other cereal offerings, was described as *'azkarah*, usually translated memorial offering, but invocation offering is more likely given the context.[79] Leviticus 24.7 implies that the incense was the *'azkarah*, but the Targums imply that the bread itself was the *'azkarah*.[80] If the divinity had been invoked over the bread, this would explain its extreme holiness, confirmed by the fact that when the tabernacle was transported through the desert, the ark and the table were the only items to have three coverings; all the others had only two (Num. 4.5–8).

There are several places in the LXX where the Hebrew 'presence' is understood as a circumlocution for the LORD; thus 'My Presence will go with you' (Exod. 33.14) became in the LXX 'I myself, *autos*, will go with you'. Isaiah 63.9: 'The Angel of his Presence saved them' became 'Not an ambassador nor an angel, but he himself saved them'. The Bread of the Presence probably meant 'the bread of the divine presence'.

Wisdom set up her house with seven pillars (Josephus says that the main entrance to the tabernacle had seven pillars, *Ant.* 3.12.4),[81] and she invited devotees to her table (Prov. 9.5). It is interesting that later tradition links the tabernacle and the Bread of the Presence to Wisdom: 'The House of Wisdom is the tabernacle, and Wisdom's table is Bread of Presence and wine' (*Lev. R.* XI.9). The poem in Proverbs 9 is much interpolated, but it is clear here that Wisdom offered the bread and wine of her table to those who sought the way of insight (Prov. 9.5–6), and in *Ben Sira* Wisdom herself promised 'Those who eat *me* will hunger for more' (*Ben Sira* 24.21). The gift of Wisdom was eternal life (e.g. *Wisd.* 8.13) as well as knowledge, and the obvious way to have eaten Wisdom was as the Bread of Presence, the Bread of Life perhaps? It would be interesting to speculate what was said to the priests as they received their pieces of the broken shewbread each Sabbath.

There had at one time been meals in the temple; the elders who saw God on Sinai and then ate and drank before him (Exod. 24.11) is an encoded reference to this, as too is Psalm 23, the table set before the anointed one. *Genesis Rabbah* links the bread and wine of Melchizedek, the more ancient priesthood in Jerusalem, to the bread and wine of Wisdom: whilst instructing Abraham in the priesthood, Melchizedek brought out the Bread of the Presence, and there follows a reference to Proverbs 9, the invitation to Wisdom's table (*Gen. R.* XLIII.6).

According to *1 Enoch*, the problem at the beginning of the second temple, i.e. after Wisdom had been banished from the temple, was that the bread on the table was polluted and not pure (*1 En.* 89.73). Malachi is similar; the bread was polluted (not 'food'; both MT and LXX have 'bread') and the divine presence was not in the temple. 'Seek the presence/face of God and he will be gracious to us. With such a gift he will not lift up his face/presence upon you' (Mal. 1.7–9 translating literally). What follows in Malachi, after the condemnation of the impure Bread of the Presence, became for Christians a prophecy of the Eucharist: 'From the rising of the sun to its setting, my Name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my Name and a pure offering' (Mal. 1.11; Justin, *Trypho* 41).

The clearest description of Wisdom in the Hebrew Scriptures is Proverbs 8, where a female figure speaks about herself. She is outside the city (8.2) and calls to the foolish people within, offering them the true riches of her teaching rather than silver and gold. Those who seek her will rule justly and find enduring wealth and prosperity. Wisdom, then, was an excluded figure, and the text implies that this was done for the sake of money and political power. The second part of the chapter is a poem about the ancient Wisdom, a female figure who was begotten and brought forth (i.e. born) before the visible world was created (8.24–25) and who was beside the LORD as he established the heavens and

marked out the foundations of the earth (8.27–29). She was beside him like an ''Amon', (8.30), a master workman (but LXX *harmozousa,* the joiner or tuner). The creation was thus the work of two, a male and a female, as in Genesis 1.26–27. These verses in Genesis have a curious mixture of male and female, singular and plural forms, which may indicate something about the divine figure in whose image humans were made.[82]

The One who Left Jerusalem

I want now to look briefly at three texts from the period when, according to the Enoch tradition, Wisdom, who had been the angel protector of Jerusalem and a high priest, was banished from the temple.

First, there are the oracles against the ruler of Tyre in Ezekiel 28, a pair of oracles apparently about one figure, reminiscent of the two aspects of a divinity known in the Ugaritic texts. The sun goddess, for example, was known by her own name and by two other names, which were herself as the rising sun and herself as the setting sun. This 'double' female divinity had a 'double' son, the morning/evening star.[83] The crucial aspect of the second oracle in Ezekiel 28 is that the cherub addressed is feminine,[84] full of wisdom and perfect in beauty (Ezek. 28.14: 'Thou Cherub', rather than 'with a Cherub'). There is a curious mixture of masculine and feminine forms in the oracle, complicated by the fact that so many forms are ambiguous. The final kaph or tau ending can be read as either masculine or feminine. The cherub was first described as the 'seal of proportion, *toknit*', or the 'seal of the pattern, *tabnit*',[85] both words looking similar in Hebrew. The latter is more likely, as Ezekiel used the word elsewhere (8.3,10; 10.8) to describe for example the *form* of an angelic hand, something from the invisible world appearing and made visible. Let us suppose for a moment that the cherub was the 'seal' of the pattern, or the one who joined together the pattern, or was the seal to impress the pattern. This would then be part of that creation theology in which everything was bound together and sealed with the Name (e.g *Prayer of Manasseh* 3; implicit in Job e.g. 9.7; 38.8–11; 38.31), the Name worn by the high priest, and spoken by him only when the creation had been renewed on the Day of Atonement.[86] Had the cherub been the one who sealed together the invisible plan, this was a high priestly role, echoed in Ephesians 1.10, the One who unites all things in heaven and on earth, or a Wisdom role as in Colossians 1.17, 'he is before all things and in him all things hold together'. The unusual word *'amon*, used to describe Wisdom in Prov. 8 became, in the LXX, 'the one who holds together'.

This wise and beautiful cherub-seal had been placed on the holy mountain as a God (or was placed on the holy mountain of the gods), and walked to and fro[87] in the midst of stones/sons of fire.[88] The

following description of the cherub is not easy to read;[89] perhaps it meant *anointed* and overshadowing,[90] or perhaps the first word meant measuring. There is an enigmatic line in the *Gospel of Philip* 62, 'Messiah has two meanings; both the Christ and the measured', showing that this other aspect of the anointed one was known at the end of the second temple period. Now measuring was an aspect of creating, e.g. Job 26.10; 28.25; 38.5, 37; the measurements of the creation were the secret knowledge which gave power,[91] and they were revealed to a high priest when he was anointed (e.g. *2 Enoch*, chapters 22 ff., where Enoch is anointed and then shown the secrets of creation).

What is clear in Ezekiel 28.13 is that the cherub wore the breastplate of the high priest. The Hebrew text is shorter at this point than the LXX, but in the Greek the list of stones prepared for the cherub corresponds exactly to those prepared for the high priest (Exod. 28.17–20). Ezekiel's oracle was against an anointed guardian cherub, a high priest, who was thrown out of Eden. The punishment was terrible; cast as an unholy thing from the mountain of God, because the cherub's sanctuaries had themselves been desecrated. Consuming fire came forth from the midst of the cherub, and all were appalled at the cherub's fearful end. An anointed guardian angel high priest thrown out in the time of Ezekiel can only have been the Queen of Heaven, Wisdom, especially as the cherub was female.[92]

The departure of the Queen is described in Ezekiel's great visions of the glory departing from the temple and going to Babylon. The 'opacity' of the texts in Ezekiel 1 and 10 shows how little we really understand them, and without some idea of what we are reading, it is not possible to make sensible choices when there are words with more than one meaning. The translator creates a new text and can quite easily produce something far from the mind of the original writer. Ezekiel 1 is in places unreadable. There is throughout a change between singular and plural, masculine and feminine forms. The AV, which is a very literal translation, will illustrate the point: 'Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures with his four faces' (Ezek. 1.15). St Jerome thought this curious mixture of genders was to indicate that there was neither male nor female in heaven: 'The same is called both a man and a woman', he wrote (*On Ezekiel* 1.1.19). Ezekiel described a stormy wind and a cloud flashing fire, in whose midst were four Living One(s): 'And their appearance was the likeness of a human.' They had four faces, i.e. presences, and four wings, and in the midst of the Living Ones(s) was something that looked like torches moving to and fro, v. 13.[93] Now if we are dealing here with the plurality of divinity, should we translate 'Living Ones' in the same way as we translate *'elohim*, plural, as God, singular? Was she the Living One? There was also one wheel on the earth by the Living One(s), constructed as a wheel within a wheel, with the gleam of

tarshish, and there were rings/rims full of eyes/points of light. What Ezekiel saw were sparkling rings around the Living One, moving with her. The Spirit is then introduced into the description, vv. 20, 21: the wheels went wherever the Spirit went, 'for the Spirit of Life/the Living One [singular] was in the wheels', words repeated in the following verse. The mixture of singular and plural returns in the next verse: 'the likeness upon the heads of the Living One was a firmament like the gleam of fearful ice stretched out over their heads'.[94] Above this firmament was the likeness of a throne, and on the throne, the likeness of a human, as was said of the Living One(s) in v. 5. The fiery upper figure was also like *hashmal*, surrounded by brightness, and this was the likeness of the Glory of the LORD, v. 28.

What Ezekiel the priest described must have been 'his' temple and holy of holies. There are two figures: one enthroned above the firmament, that is, in the holy of holies, as the veil of the temple corresponded to the firmament of the second day of creation, and then there was another figure or cluster of figures who were outside the veil, beneath the firmament, in the visible creation. *It is this cluster that is so hard to describe; perhaps a fourfold Living One, known as the Spirit of Life, or perhaps the Spirit of Life in the midst of the fourfold group.* (Recall that the cherub thrown from the mountain of God had formerly gone to and fro in the midst of sons of fire, Ezek. 28.14.) 'The likeness of One had they all four' has been suggested as a suitably ambiguous rendering for the description in Ezek. 1.16 and in Ezek. 10.10.[95]

There were in this being four presences/faces. It is interesting that there were four 'presences' round the throne in Enoch's vision of heaven, who were identified as the four archangels: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Phanuel (*1 En.* 40.1), and that the four throne names of the newly 'born' king in the Hebrew of Isaiah 9 – 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' – were rendered in the LXX by one title: the Angel of Great Counsel, Wisdom. Ezekiel the young priest received a scroll in this vision (Ezek. 2.8–3.3), just as John the seer was to see the Lamb receiving a scroll (Rev. 4–5). These are the only two passages in canonical texts which describe the throne with four living creatures, and each involves a scroll.

We are told a few more things about the vision beneath the firmament: there were 'the wheels' *'ophannim*, a wheel (sing.) within a wheel, there were 'their [fem.] rings' (the word *gab* (masc.) means many things, but the underlying meaning is roundness) and their, i.e. the rings' (masc.), height and fearfulness. The sound of the wings of the Living One(s) was like the sound of many waters (Wisdom was often described as fountains flowing from the throne, e.g. *1 En.* 48.3, the fountains of Wisdom where the thirsty could drink). It was like the sound/voice of Shaddai, and according to the second vision in chapter

10, 'This was the Living One [sing.] that I saw beneath the God of Israel at the River Chebar' (Ezek. 10.20).

But who was Shaddai? (Ezek. 1.24; 10.5). The name is usually translated 'Almighty' but the meaning is not known for certain; the Vulgate chose *omnipotens*, and outside the Pentateuch, the LXX often used *pantokrator*. Where Shaddai occurs in the Pentateuch, however, there is no equivalent word in the Greek. It is simply 'my', 'your, or 'their'. Thus 'I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as El Shaddai', became in the LXX 'I appeared to [them] being their God' (Exod. 6.3).[96] All the examples of Shaddai in the Pentateuch that can be classified are assigned to the priestly strand. Shaddai appears most frequently in Job, where sometimes the Greek has *kurios*, sometimes *pantokrator* and sometimes no equivalent word.

Etymology, however, offers interesting possibilities,[97] and one of them is that the word means 'breasts'. Shaddai is a curious form for a dual/plural, but it is found elsewhere in Ezekiel (Ezek. 13.18 has *ydy* as the dual/plural of hand 'joints of the hands'). In Genesis, Shaddai is linked to fertility, fruitfulness and many children (Gen. 28.3; 35.11; 48.3–4), giving blessings from the breasts and from the womb (Gen. 49.25). In particular, Shaddai promised sons who would be kings (Gen. 17.6; 35.11). El Shaddai was remembered as the deity of the patriarchs, and identified as the LORD, the God of Moses in Exodus 6.3. A male/female breasted deity appears in the *Odes of Solomon*.[98]

The second vision is in Ezekiel 10, where the prophet describes the Glory leaving the temple. There is the same mixture of singular and plural, and there are words whose meaning is unknown. The fullest description of the Living One is in v. 12: 'all their body' (singular body, plural suffix) was full of eyes/points of light. In addition to their body – a problematic word to which we shall return – there is another unknown word, rendered as backs or spokes, then their (masc.) hands and wings, and the wheels, *'opannim*. The following verse introduces a different word for wheel, *galgal*, which may mean whirlwind. There are various translations offered in the English versions, but RSV is misleading as it makes the whirlwind plural.[99] Remarkable in this chapter are the three references to the Living One, singular, in vv. 15, 17, 20. In each case the RSV translates as a plural; the AV is correct: 'This [or she] is the Living Creature that I saw by the River Chebar.'

The words translated 'all their body' in v. 12 are a problem: *kl bśrm* is translated in the AV as 'their whole body' but in the RSV as 'their rims'. Jerome (*Commentary on Ezekiel* 3.10.102) noted that *baśar* 'non corpus sed carnem significat.' It means not body but flesh. Elsewhere, but without a suffix, it means 'all created things': the LORD provides food for 'all flesh' (Ps. 136.25), and without Spirit, 'all flesh' would perish (Job 34.15; also Lev. 17.14; Num. 18.15; Joel 2.28).Were 'all creatures' somehow present in the fiery vision, represented perhaps by the points

of light, and was the Living One herself/itself the Source of Life, the vessel in which all life was held? (cf. Acts 3.15 Jesus as the 'Author of Life'). Later Merkavah mystics believed that the souls of the righteous were stored by the heavenly throne, both those who had already lived on earth and those yet to be born (*3 Enoch* 43). This later text is similar to *Jubilees* 2.2, that on Day One the LORD created the angels and 'all the spirits of his creatures which are in heaven and on earth', and to Jerome's understanding of *Ben Sira* 18.1: 'He who lives in eternity created all things at the same time.' Day One was represented in the temple by the holy of holies in which was the heavenly throne, and Ezekiel's vision was a vision of the throne as he knew it. Ezekiel was a priest in the first temple (Ezek.1.3). Ezekiel's near contemporary who wrote the first chapter of Genesis described the Spirit fluttering over the face of the waters before the world was made. The Spirit is not described; might Ezekiel, who saw his vision on the bank of the River Chebar, have seen the Spirit he knew hovering over those waters? Might he have imagined the Creatrix as the fiery winged Living One? The later Targumists did translate that first verse in Genesis : 'In the beginning with Wisdom the LORD created ...',[100] because they still remembered who had been there.

Who or what was the figure Ezekiel described leaving the temple that he knew? She was a compound, fourfold presence, a fiery figure with wings, surrounded by wheels within wheels, which were full of points of light. Her sound was the sound of Shaddai, the deity with breasts who had promised fertility and kings to the patriarchs. After the vision, the prophet received a scroll. If we incorporate features from the oracle of the guardian cherub, we have a protecting figure with outstretched wings, full of wisdom and beauty, vested as a high priest on the day she was created, the seal of the creation, who walked in the midst of stones or sons of fire. As early as the time of Ezekiel, the manifold presence of the deity had been described in terms of faces, presences, *panim*, which, translated literally into Greek, became the *prosopa*, usually translated 'persons' of the Trinity in works of Christian theology.[101]

The oracle against the cherub was the original departure from Eden, later rewritten as the more familiar story of Genesis 2–3, with the similar themes of abuse of knowledge and the fall into mortality. The visions of the departing throne chariot were also antecedents of the Genesis. The figure whom Ezekiel saw on the throne was the likeness of Adam (Ezek. 1.26) and the female figure beneath the throne was the Spirit of Life *ḥayyah* (Ezek. 1.20), in whom all life was contained. Adam called his wife *ḥawwah*, a very similar name, because she was 'the mother of all life' (Gen. 3.20).

Memories of the Queen

This fourfold figure of Ezekiel's vision appears in later Jewish mystical texts. In the *Hekalot Rabbati*, for example, there are titles for the LORD which clearly mean fourfold. *Tootrousia* – imitating the sound of Greek words – and thus suggesting that it was used by a Greek-speaking community, comes from *tetra*, four, and *ousia*, a word with several meanings but fourfold essence would make sense here.[102]

A fourfold female figure had an important place in Gnostic systems as they are depicted in later texts. She has the name Barbelo, most likely derived from the Hebrew meaning fourfold God, *be'arba' 'eloah*, and she was the second of the divine beings. She was described as 'the perfect glory in the aeons ... the womb of everything, for she is prior to them all ... the Mother-Father, the first human, the holy spirit ... the thrice named androgynous one ... the eternal aeon among the invisible ones and the first to come forth' (*Apocryphon of John* CG II.1.5). This text goes on to describe her as the androgynous five aeon, a reference to her being the one in the midst of the four. *Zostrianos*, a baptismal text, explains this fivefold aeon: 'Considered individually, the four belong to it. The fifth aeon consists of them all together, and the fifth exists as one. The four make up the fifth ...' (*Zostrianos* CG VIII.1.116–117). Other texts describe her as the mother of the aeons (*Melchizedek* CG IX.1.16); as endowed with the patterns and forms of those who truly exist (*Allogenes* CG XI.3.51); as the invisible one within the all ... the perfect glory of the immeasurable invisible one (*First Thought* CG XIII.1.35). The collection of Hymns known as *The Three Steles of Seth* describes Barbelo as male and female, one who has moved from the upper realm to the lower:

> O you who have been divided into the quintet, O You who have emanated from the superior and for the sake of the inferior have gone forth into the middle ... we praise you O thrice male, for you have unified the entirety from out of the all, You stood at rest, you stood at rest in the beginning, you have become divided everywhere, you have remained one. (*Three Steles* CG VII.5.120–21)

> Great is the first aeon, male virginal Barbelo, she who is called perfect. Thou [fem.] hast first seen him who really pre-exists, that he is non-being, and from him and through him thou hast pre-existed eternally ... We bless thee, producer [fem.] of perfection, aeon giver [fem.] thou hast [seen] the eternal ones that they are from shadow ... and thou art one [fem.] of the one [masc.]. (*Three Steles* 122)

> We have beheld that which is really first existent ... For your light is shining on us ... Command us to behold you so that we might be saved. (*Three Steles* 124–25).

Barbelo corresponds in so many ways to Wisdom, to the figure whom Ezekiel saw leaving the temple, and to the female figure who appears elsewhere in the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. The 'Hidden

One' or 'the eternal One' are literal translations of the word traditionally rendered '*the* Virgin' in Isaiah 7.14. Not *a,* but *the* hidden/eternal One, whom the translators of the Greek saw fit to render as the Virgin even though they could have chosen 'young woman'. Was the heavenly Virgin the figure they had in mind?[103] The people of ancient Ugarit had had among their divinities a Great Lady, the Virgin mother of the seventy sons of God, just as the Virgin Barbelo was the mother of the aeons. Ezekiel had seen an image of the great Lady of the Creation in his vision of the temple,[104] and the seventy sons of God were also known.[105] A divine figure who must have been androgynous created male and female in the divine image (Gen. 1.26–27), and, like Barbelo, Ezekiel's Living One was both male and female.

The Pillar Figurines

We now turn to the archaeological evidence. For over a century, archaeologists have been trying to identify and explain the small pillar figurines (between 8 cm and 14 cm high) found in considerable numbers in Judah and Jerusalem. They are female figures, and were at first explained as toys or as elements in some magical practices. Then it was suggested that they represented Asherah, and this theory, after many modifications, is now widely accepted. A recent report by Raz Kletter has identified 854 of these objects as Judaean pillar figurines,[106] and has distinguished two main types: one with a mould-made head attached to a handmade pillar body, and the other entirely handmade. The latter have only eye indentations to indicate a face. Figurines found in Jerusalem and north Judaea,[107] but nowhere else, often had turban-shaped headdresses. A few had a lamp over their heads. The body is a woman with her hands held below very prominent breasts. There are often traces of red and yellow painted decoration on the neck and shoulders, perhaps bracelets or necklaces. The face is often painted red.[108] Some hold a disc vertically in front of them, and this is the only object they hold.[109] These discs have been identified as shields, drums, or bread, but the small size of some of them makes a loaf the most likely. Some of the discs are decorated, with a cross, or with patterns around the edge. The Judaean pillar figurines are distinctive: 'It would be safe to conclude that the JPFs went out of use before the Persian period, most likely around 586 BCE.'[110] Of the 854 figurines found, 96 per cent (822) were found in the heartland of Judah, and of these, almost half (405) were found in Jerusalem. Kletter concluded that the JPFs were not identical with the Asherah, despite many scholars having assumed that the pillar body of the figurine represented the tree trunk. They were:

> cheap everyday objects, representing the goddess in private houses, in front of ordinary people ... possibly as a protecting figure in domestic houses, more likely a figure which

bestowed plenty, especially in the domain of female lives. They were not a forbidden cult, at least for most of the time, and for most of the population.[111]

Many of the figurines (199) still have signs of having been painted white, others have red painted over the white.[112] They were often found with horse and rider figurines.[113]

Who were these little female figurines? The refugees from Jerusalem complained to Jeremiah that when they had venerated the Queen of Heaven in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, they had prospered and had plenty (Jer. 44.18). This is where the figurines were found. The figurines disappeared from Judah after the time of Ezekiel, who described the Living One leaving the temple. Some of the figurines from the area in and around Jerusalem wear a turban; the high priest wore a turban, and Ezekiel described an angel high priest leaving the holy mountain. There are traces of white paint; the women of Jerusalem had woven linen garments for her (2 Kgs 23.7). There are traces of red paint on their faces; she had looked like fire, like burning torches (Ezek. 1.13).[114] Some of the figurines are carrying unidentified discs; special loaves had been central to her cult. The figurines had enormous eyes; Wisdom gave sight, and those who abandoned her lost their vision. The most prominent feature of each figurine is her breasts, emphasized by the position of her hands; Ezekiel heard the voice of Shaddai as she left. These figurines are unique to Judah and Jerusalem. She was no import from an alien cult. She was the genius of Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion who was 'set under a cloud' and 'cast down from heaven to earth' (Lam. 2.1). The figurines were often found with horses and riders: in the Book of Revelation, when the Bride, arrayed in fine linen, prepared for her marriage, the King of Kings and LORD of LORDs rode out from heaven on a white horse (Rev. 19.6-16).

The Lady in Early Christian Texts

Wisdom is prominent in early Christian texts, even though this is not often recognized, because nobody expects to find her. The clearest description of her is in the letter to Laodicea, where the risen LORD speaks to John his prophet in the person of Wisdom (Rev. 3.14–22). The LORD identifies himself as the Amon, the beginning of God's creation, clearly the female figure of Proverbs 8. 22–31, understanding the more familiar Amen of Revelation 3.14 as the more likely Amon of Proverbs 8.30.[115] As Wisdom, the LORD offers true riches, the white garments of resurrected life, salve to anoint and open eyes. Wisdom had offered true wealth and life (Prov. 3.13–18), and those who forsook her lost their vision (*1 En.* 93.8). Wisdom had been rejected and returned to heaven (*1 En.* 42.2), but the risen LORD was

asking again to come in (Rev. 3.20). Wisdom invited her devotees to eat with her (Prov. 9.5); the risen LORD was prepared to eat with those who would open the door (Rev. 3.20). Wisdom had shared the heavenly throne (*Wisdom* 9.4,10) and she offered to share her throne with those who conquered (Rev. 3.21). Such a description of Wisdom is unmistakable: the first Christians were taught that the risen LORD was Wisdom. Thus Paul could write, with no explanation, that Christ was the power of God and the Wisdom of God, the male and the female aspects incarnate (1 Cor. 1.24). Jesus and John were the children of Wisdom (Luke 7.35), and it was Wisdom who had sent the prophets and apostles (Luke 11.49).

The Amon was understood by the translator of the LXX to mean 'the woman who joins things together' (*harmozousa*), and this underlies the description of the cosmic Christ in Colossians 1.15–20. The image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation, in him all things were created.[116] He is before all things and in him all things hold together. In her role as the Spirit (a feminine noun in Hebrew and Aramaic), she was the bond of unity which inspired Paul's exposition to the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 12).

Most of the 'I am' sayings of the Fourth Gospel are Wisdom imagery: the Bread of Life (John 6.35); the Light of the World, which, given the temple context of the saying, must have meant the menorah (John 8.12); the Resurrection and the Life (John 11.25); the Way (cf. Prov. 8.22), the Truth and the Life (John 14.6); and the Vine, bearing in mind that the tree of life was said to have fruit like grapes, and that the kings, the divine sons, had been branches of the tree (John 15.5).

More allusive is the account of the life of Mary described in the *Infancy Gospel of James*, where the images of Wisdom are woven into the story, together with images drawn from the temple. Mary was offered to the temple at the age of three (like the infant Samuel, 1 Sam. 1.24), and there she lived until she was twelve years old, receiving food from the hand of an angel (presumably, from a priest). She danced in the temple and everyone loved her. When she reached puberty, the priests found Joseph, a widower, to be her husband, and she left the temple. When a new veil was needed for the temple, Mary was one of the group of young women chosen to make it. First she was given red and purple wool to spin. She first heard the angel when she was fetching water from the well and went home in fear. Whilst she was spinning at home, she heard the angel again, and accepted her role as the mother of the LORD. Time stood still at the moment of the birth: the stars were still in their courses, birds were motionless in the sky: 'And of a sudden all things moved onward in their course' (*James* 18). This is the Gospel which has all the details familiar from the picture cycles of the Life of the Virgin, and the ikon of the nativity: how the child was born in a cave, how Salome and a midwife attended Mary after the birth, and

how Elizabeth hid in a cave with her infant son John when Herod's men were searching for the young children.

This *Infancy Gospel* was known both to Clement (*Misc.* 7.16) and Origen (*On Matt.* 10.17), and is the oldest known complete Christian text (Papyrus Bodmer V).[117] It is also proof that Mary was being depicted as Wisdom in the second century. The infant dancing in the holy of holies was Wisdom on Day One, 'daily his delight, playing before him' (Prov. 8.30b). Like the Woman clothed with the sun, she emerged from the holy of holies before her child was born. While she was pregnant with her child, she was weaving the new veil, the means whereby the Glory was concealed yet also revealed when it became the garments of the high priest. She was also spinning the thread when the angel spoke to her, the image in the ikon of the Annunciation. Centuries earlier, the spindle had been the symbol of the Great Lady at Ugarit.

The Lady in Liturgy and Art

Mary came to be described as Wisdom, and most of the traces of the Wisdom tradition are now to be found in association with Mary. The Great Lady had been the mother of the LORD, and, as in the ancient court of Jerusalem, Immanuel's human mother was the Great Lady on earth. The imagery is clear in the Book of Revelation, which preserves the very earliest Christian imagery. The Woman clothed with the sun, the Hebrew counterpart to the sun deity Athirat, emerged from the holy of holies, Day One, to give birth to her son who was destined to be taken up to the throne of God. John knew of the Great Lady in the holy of holies, and how she was also the Bride of her own son. The evidence of the Book of Revelation explains why the *Infancy Gospel of James* was composed with Wisdom imagery.

The most ancient images of the Wisdom tradition were known in the young church, the images of Wisdom as the holy of holies in whom all life began,[118] as the menorah and tree of life, as the burning 'bush', as the Queen and mother of the King, the Morning Star, as the co-Creatrix in the Beginning. Wisdom imagery appears in the earliest eucharistic prayers,[119] and shaped the traditions of the Feasts of Mary. The lectionaries show that Proverbs 3, 8 and 9, and *Ben Sira* 24, the great Wisdom chapters, were the favoured readings, and the prayers were full of Wisdom imagery.[120] 'The Bush on the mountain that was not consumed by fire ... plainly prefigured Thee, O bride of God. For in a material womb, unconsumed, Thou hast received the divine and immaterial fire'.[121] 'We sing Thy praises as the tabernacle that held God', 'Thou candlestick with many lights', 'The Living Ark of God',[122] 'Hail Thou Burning Bush that remains unconsumed', 'The bush that burned with fire and yet remained unconsumed disclosed the secret

mystery that shall come to pass in Thee',[123] 'Thy Son, O Virgin, has truly made Thee dwell in the holy of holies as a bright candlestick, flaming with immaterial fire as a golden censer burning with divine coal, as the vessel of the manna, the rod of Aaron, the tablet written by God, as a holy ark and table of the bread of life'.[124]

The Canon of the Akathist and the Akathist Hymn show just how completely the Wisdom imagery was retained and woven into the poetry of the Church. Mary is addressed by a range of titles that reflect Wisdom in all her aspects, *not all of them transmitted in the biblical texts.* Some, such as the Queen and Mother, or the Mother of God, need no explanation. Others derive from Wisdom's being identified as the holy of holies, the place of the Light of Day One, which was often described as the tower: Mary is 'the Dwelling place of light', 'the Place of sanctification of the Glory', ' the Radiance of the mystical Day', 'the Bridal Chamber full of light', 'the Greater Holy of holies', 'the Tabernacle of the Word', 'the Tower of the Church', 'Strength and fortress of humankind'. Yet other titles derive from the tree of life whose fruit was like white grapes, and whose perfumed oil gave eternal life and transformed the anointed one into an angel: Mary is 'the Lily whose perfume scents the faithful', 'the fragrant Incense and Myrrh of great price', 'the Cause of the deification of all', 'the true Vine that has produced the ripe cluster of grapes', 'the Tree of glorious fruit from which believers are nourished', 'the Scent of Christ's fragrance'. She was also remembered as the menorah: Mary is 'the Lampstand', 'a Lamp that bears the light'. As the One in the holy of holies, which had housed the great chariot throne and the ark with the mercy seat, she is addressed as: 'the fiery Throne', 'the fiery Chariot of the Word', 'the Mercy seat of the world', 'the Ark'. As the one who offered the shewbread, she is addressed as: 'the Living table that held the Bread of Life', 'the Vessel bearing the manna that sweetens the senses of the ungodly', 'the Food that replaced the manna'. As the Mother of the Morning Star she is remembered as: 'Mother of the Star that never sets', and 'the radiant Dawn'. As the *harmozousa* of Proverbs 8.30, a word which can mean join together or tune a musical instrument, she is: 'the One who brings opposites into harmony'. Just as Wisdom had led Israel through the desert (*Wisdom* 10.17) she is 'the Pillar of fire'. In her ancient role as the genius of Jerusalem, she is 'the City of the King of All'. As Wisdom she is 'the one who enlightens many with knowledge', 'kindling the immaterial light she guides all to divine knowledge'. And from the most ancient stratum of all, she is, like the Great Lady at Ugarit, 'the Intercessor', and 'the Heifer who bore the unblemished sacrifice'.[125]

Mary is often depicted as Wisdom in Christian art. The Lady in the apse, as in the great churches of Torcello and Murano in the Venetian lagoon, or in Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, or in St Sophia in Kiev, is also

Wisdom in the holy of holies, Day One. Sometimes she holds her son; sometimes she stands alone. In the chapel of the General House of the Marist Fathers at Monteverde, Rome, there is a fresco in the apse; God the Father is now looking down into an empty space. 'Kneeling angels offer incense on either side of the same empty space and at the base is a quotation from Proverbs 8.27 "Quando praeparabat caelas, aderam." At one time the empty space was filled visually by a statue of Our Lady placed in front of the fresco and above the altar.'[126] Later generations forgot the symbolism and decided that the statue was out of place in such a position and removed it. Sometimes she is depicted as the high priest, Wisdom ministering in the temple in Zion (*Ben Sira* 24.10). There is a fifth-century carving on a stone slab in the crypt of the Basilica of Ste Madeleine, S. Maximin, Provence. It is the figure of a bare-headed woman with her hands held up in the posture of prayer, and the inscription reads: MARIA VIRGO MINESTER DE TEMPULO GEROSALE.[127] There is in the Louvre a medieval picture by the Master of Amiens depicting Mary as a priest in the sanctuary, vested and assisted by tiny vested angels.[128] There is the remarkable mural in the apse of St Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki, which depicts Mary between two angels, above the golden plate of the mercy seat.[129] In the tradition of the tabernacle, it was the LORD who appeared over the mercy seat (Exod. 25.22; Lev.16.2), but here it is Wisdom/Mary who has this role.

There are the ikons of the Burning Bush, with Mary and her Son surrounded by the angels of the holy of holies, and there are all the churches dedicated to Holy Wisdom, not just in Byzantium but throughout the Slavonic world, whose feasts of title fall on the feasts of Mary, her Nativity or her Assumption. There is the ikon of the communion of the apostles, where Mary stands above the table, and Wisdom above them all. Most mysterious is the ikon of the Holy Wisdom in the style of Novgorod. She sits enthroned, vested and crowned, carrying the staff of the high priest and a scroll. She is a fiery winged angel, set within two concentric circles of light that are themselves spangled with tiny points of light. Above her head is the blue swathe of the starry firmament with its angels, and above that is the heavenly throne of the LORD. When I first saw this ikon I recognized her immediately as the female figure of Ezekiel's vision. She is a fiery winged creature, set in 'a wheel within a wheel' (Ezek. 1.16) and 'the wheels were full of points of light' ('eyes' Ezek. 1.18). 'Above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne' (Ezek. 1.26) and seated on it 'the likeness as it were of a human form'. There are too many similarities for this to be coincidence, and yet I have been unable to find an explanation of this ikon form.

Even more significant are the sophiological symbols employed to depict divine Sophia in the theology of colour and imagery. Here the most complicated and involved

dogmatic compositions, only with difficulty capable of definite interpretation, embody the devout contemplation of the unknown makers. These ikons have been accepted and authorised by the Church and are preserved to this day. But these memorials of symbolic sophiology remain dumb, and though their meaning must have been clear at the time when they were composed, in our time which lacks sophianic inspiration, they often remain enigmatic and partially incomprehensible relics of a former age. Scholastic theology commonly abandons the whole field of research into the lofty symbolism of sophianic churches and ikons, together with the appropriate texts for divine worship, to the realm of archaeology, as something essentially antiquated, or else interprets it somewhat unsympathetically as a theological misunderstanding. ...

All this wealth of symbolism has been preserved in the archives of ecclesiastical antiquities, but, covered by the dust of ages, it has been no use to anyone. The time has come, however, for us to sweep away the dust of ages and to decipher the sacred script, to reinstate the tradition of the Church, in this instance all but broken, as a living tradition. (Sergius Bulgakov)[130]

11

TEMPLE AND TIMAEUS

If therefore it should be shown to you that Plato and his successors have agreed in their philosophy with the Hebrews, it is time to examine the date at which he lived and to compare the antiquity of the Hebrew theologians and prophets with the age of the philosophers of Greece. (Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* 10.14)

Pythagoras brought this teaching to Greece, along with the rest of Kabbalah ... If I declare that Kabbalah and Pythagoreanism are of the same stuff, I will not be departing from facts. (Johann Reuchlin, *On the Art of the Kabbalah*, Book 2 (1517))

The Jews claimed that their traditions and scriptures had influenced the Greeks, not just at the end of the second temple period, but in the very earliest period of Greek philosophy. Josephus believed that Pythagoras had been influenced by the teaching of the Jews, and quoted the work of Hermippus on Pythagoras, to the effect that his teaching had been 'in imitation of the doctrines of the Jews and Thracians, which he transferred into his own philosophy' (*Against Apion* 1.22).[1] Josephus offered many examples of Jews in contact with the Greeks, including an incident when Aristotle engaged in learned debate with a Jew in Asia Minor. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Miscellanies*, listed many who had benefited from the teaching of the Jews: Numa, king of the Romans, although a Pythagorean, 'benefited from the teaching of Moses and forbade the Romans to make an image of God ...'. He quoted Aristobulus: 'Plato too had followed our legislation and had evidently studied carefully the several precepts contained in it.' He claimed that the story of the Exodus and the Law of Moses had been translated into Greek before the time of Alexander the Great, and that Pythagoras 'transferred many of our precepts to his own system of doctrines'. He quoted Numenius, the Pythagorean philosopher: 'For what is Plato but Moses speaking in Attic Greek?' (*Misc.* 1.15,22). Plato and Pythagoras are the names that occur time and again.

Origen's work against Celsus was another aspect of this debate; was Christianity just Platonism for the masses? 'Celsus had attacked the pretensions of Christianity, that their religion was the ancient Wisdom that had inspired the Greek philosophers.'[2] Eusebius devoted the whole of his fifteen-volume work *The Preparation of the Gospel* to this same subject. He took elements from Plato and showed that they were derived from the Hebrew Scriptures. '[Plato] altered the oracle ... "I am that I am" into "What is that which always is and has no becoming?" (*Preparation* 11.9 comparing Exod. 3.14 and *Timaeus* 27d). 'And now beside the description "God holding the beginning and end and middle of all things" set ... "I God am the first and I am with the

last"' (*Preparation* 11.13 comparing *Laws* 4.715 and Isa. 41.4). The argument in the *Timaeus* that there had been one pattern for the creation presupposed belief in one God. The Creator in the *Timaeus* is good, as is the God of the Hebrew Scriptures (*Preparation* 11.21). The philosophy of Plato, he concluded, was 'in very many things in agreement with the doctrines of the Hebrews' (*Preparation* 13.13).

It would be easy to dismiss these texts as predictable claims to national or confessional superiority, and not to be taken too seriously, but this would be a mistake. The similarity between much of Plato and the Hebrew tradition is too great for coincidence. Even though the current fashion is to date many of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Persian period, to suggest that Plato (died 348 BCE) was an influence on their formation would require a very late date indeed. If we go behind Plato to Pythagoras, acknowledged to have been an influence on the later philosopher even though the precise extent of that influence is still debated, another possibility emerges. The link between Plato and the Hebrew tradition could have been through Pythagoras, as the ancient apologists had said. A glance at the dates involved, and a simple study of feasibility, shows that such claims could have been well founded. There are striking similarities, and if we allow for the fact that the teachings attributed to Pythagoras have been for the most part rationalised and presented as science, whereas the parallel Hebrew texts are still in the form of myths and worship material, the case for Pythagoras having had contact with the older Hebrew tradition is strong. It is necessary to look first at the very little known of, and claimed for, the life and original teachings of Pythagoras, and then to attempt to trace his influence through into Plato and especially into the *Timaeus*.

In popular perceptions of the history of ancient Greece, the sixth century is antiquity, the era of the Seven Sages, yet the first temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 BCE and most of what we consider Old Testament history had happened by that time.[3] The latest date proposed for Ezra (398 BCE, but most would put him sixty years earlier) coincides with the death of Socrates in 399 BCE. The pre-Socratic philosophers flourished at the very end of the 'Old Testament period'. We also read: 'Over the origins of Greek philosophy and science ... lies the shadow of a great traditional name.'[4] This name is Pythagoras of Samos, who lived in the sixth century, at the very time when the great changes were taking place in Jerusalem. After a period of scepticism, scholars are now more confident about the value of certain ancient sources for reconstructing the life and thought of Pythagoras,[5] and so it is of considerable interest to note in Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras* that Pythagoras travelled in his youth, that he went to Sidon, 'conversed with the Phoenician hierophants' and was 'initiated in all the mysteries of Biblos and Tyre and into the sacred operations which are performed in man parts of Syria'.[6] He lived in a Phoenician temple at Mount

Carmel before travelling on to Egypt. Herodotus, who lived about a century after Pythagoras, described people in Palestine as Syrians who practised circumcision (*Histories* 2.104),[7] and so it is not impossible that the temples of 'Syria' which Pythagoras knew included those of the Hebrews. Eusebius speculated in a similar way: 'Pythagoras spent some time with the Persian Magi and became a disciple of the Egyptian prophets at the time when some of the Hebrews appear to have made their settlement in Egypt and some in Babylon' (*Preparation* 10.4). Although the dates of his life are not known for certain, he must have been in the area of Palestine before the return of the people from Babylon and the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple, and he must have been in Egypt and Babylon during 'the exile'. Since there is archaeological evidence which may indicate the presence of Greeks in late first-temple Jerusalem, i.e. the end of the seventh century BCE,[8] it is not impossible that the young Pythagoras came that way on his travels and that he had contact with the thought of the first temple. *This is very important, because most of the evidence for the teachings of Pythagoras shows that it was very similar to what can be reconstructed of the teachings and practices of the first temple priesthood.*

Dates are all important. Despite the recent trend among Old Testament scholars to date the Hebrew Scriptures in the Persian period or even later, few would deny the authenticity of the Babylonian record, that a city named Jerusalem was attacked at the beginning of the sixth century BCE. There was *something* there. Scholars are also putting increased emphasis on the extent to which the Hebrew Scriptures were written to express one particular point of view, that of the returned exiles (or Persian colonists, in the more extreme view), at the expense of anything that might have existed earlier. Nor does anyone doubt that one of the curious characteristics of the books of Samuel and Kings (the former prophets) is their discrediting of the history and achievements of the older regime in Jerusalem. *The literary remains alone indicate a massive cultural disruption in the sixth century, and the consistency of the evidence elsewhere suggests that this disruption centred on the temple and its priesthood.* The first temple in Jerusalem, as we reconstruct it from the Deuteronomic histories, was 'reformed' by Josiah and then physically destroyed by the Babylonians. All the evidence elsewhere, however, shows that this was far from being an accurate and sympathetic account of the first temple. This means that whatever Pythagoras might have learned of Hebrew tradition will not be in the *surface text* of the present Hebrew Scriptures.

If Pythagoras had travelled in this region, as the tradition records, he would have met with 'the Older Testament'.[9] He would have known the older creation story, perhaps even the world of Job, where *yhwh* was not the only name for God, where the earth was measured, and the sons of God sang together as they witnessed the creation.[10] He would have

known of a seven-based number system, that antedated the two versions of the faith, the one based on the Moses and Exodus traditions, the other on the days of the creation.[11] He would perhaps have known the astronomers and astrologers who knew the correspondence of heaven and earth (Job 38.33), and who produced the curious and complex treatises which have survived only among the Enoch texts (*1 En.* 72–82), revealed by the angel Uriel to Enoch the high priest figure (*1 En.* 75.3). The great hall of the temple which 'Enoch' knew had a pattern of stars on its ceiling (*1 En.* 14.11), and as late as the early third century BCE, Theophrastus could describe the Jews as a nation of philosophers who sat up at night looking at the stars (Fragment preserved in Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 2.26). In the first temple there had been rooftop altars and 'equipment'[12] for the host of heaven (2 Kgs 23.4,12), until the 'reforming' Josiah removed them. This is not the Old Testament world with which we are familiar, but it could well have been what the young Pythagoras found in the sixth century.

Pythagoras

Pythagoras left no writings,[13] and there was a tradition of silence among his disciples.[14] Theirs was a secret tradition, exactly what was claimed for the temple priesthood, and so comparisons are not easy. Such information as survives has to be gleaned in the first instance from the fragments of Philolaus of Croton, a late fifth-century Pythagorean who was the first to write down the teachings of Pythagoras,[15] and from the works of Aristotle, who was not sympathetic to Pythagoras' teachings. Aristotle warned about distinguishing pre-Platonic and Platonic material, and elements from Aristotle's lost treatise *On the Pythagoreans* survive as quotations elsewhere. Ancient commentators were unanimous that ideas he developed in his treatise *On the Good* were Pythagorean. There is other material in later sources, which was formerly regarded as dubious, but recent scholarship has had a more favourable opinion of it.[16] The world of the first temple has to be reconstructed in a similar way, from fragments and from the references in later, often hostile, writers. We have to distinguish between Deuteronomic and non-Deuteronomic sources, and recent scholarship here, too, has a more favourable opinion of the value of information preserved only in later texts. The situation is not ideal, but the similarities between the teachings associated with Pythagoras and those of the first temple priests are too many to be mere coincidence. This is not to suggest that Pythagoras had 'studied' in Jerusalem. It is possible that the traditions of Jerusalem priesthood were not unique to that one place, and that Pythagoras had simply encountered them in the region. The priests of the first temple had suffered massive disruption and expulsions in the time of Josiah's

purges, and it could have been their scattered descendants from whom Pythagoras learned.

There is insufficient evidence to establish anything with certainty, and Burkert's warning about the teaching of Pythagoras is important: 'A perfectly certain interpretation of a philosophy is impossible when it is known to us only indirectly and mostly in the context of polemic.'[17] This is also true of any attempt to reconstruct the pre-Josianic temple. The number of striking similarities in apparently trivial details, however, together with more fundamental correspondences, could indicate that the world view of the older temple prompted Pythagoras' later 'scientific' investigations and was the mythological framework *which so many scholars posit but none can identify*. Most of the information about Pythagorean lore concerning the creation is thought to have come through Philolaus, and Burkert argued that Philolaus actually created *the abstract form* of Pythagoras' world view: 'It was mythology in a scientific clothing.'[18] Aristotle implies this: Pythagoreans 'do not seek accounts and explanations in conformity with appearances, but try by violence to bring the appearances into line with accounts and opinions of their own' (*On the Heavens* 293a). If this was the case, the task would be to compare what lay beneath the later 'scientific' accounts of the teaching of Pythagoras with the earliest strata in the Hebrew Scriptures. This does show more than a series of random correspondences; *it is clearly two similar systems*, one which existed as a coherent whole in a temple setting, and another whose origin and characteristic mixture of images and concepts is unrelated to that of its environing culture, and remains a complete mystery.

The 'pivotal conceptions' of Pythagoras' system were identified by Cornford as: the ideal of becoming like God and the notion of *mimesis*, the correspondence of macrocosm and microcosm, the conception of harmony, and the symbol known as the *tetraktys*.[19] There is ample and obvious evidence in the tradition of the first temple for 'becoming like God', with the king as the divine son, and apotheosis appearing in the Enochic histories.[20] There is also the Holiness Code, which even in its Mosaic form, exhorts all the people to become holy ones because their LORD is Holy (Lev. 19–26).[21] This was very different from the customary Greek view that gods and mortals were separate orders, but Pythagoras is said to have taught that 'Gods and men are akin, in as much as man partakes of heat' (Diogenes Laertius 8.27). The original temple tradition was the correspondence of macrocosm and microcosm, with 'Moses' being told on Sinai to make the tabernacle according to what he had seen in his vision on the mountain (Exod. 25.9, 40).[22] The words of Deutero-Isaiah in the aftermath of the cultural upheaval of Josiah and the exile show that mimesis was a controversial issue: 'To whom will you liken God, or with what likeness compare him . . .?' and then 'the image that will not move',

words that anticipated by two centuries Plato's phrase (Isa. 40.18,20). The other examples, 'harmony' and the '*tetraktys*', can also be found in the older temple tradition, as we shall see.

Some more isolated examples: Pythagoras established that the Morning Star was identical with the Evening Star,[23] yet this was known from the mythology of Ugarit,[24] and appears in echoes from the older temple.[25] Pythagoras claimed that the world was round, *stroggule* (Diogenes Laertius 8.48); the older Hebrew creation story often mentioned the *ḥwg*, translated the 'circle' of the earth (Isa. 40.22), or the 'circle' drawn on the face of the deep (Prov. 8.27; Job 26.10) and the 'dome' of the heaven (Job. 22.14). 'Pythagoras was the first to call himself a philosopher',[26] a lover of Wisdom. He invented the word. If Wisdom had been banished from the Jerusalem temple in Josiah's purge, it is not impossible that her devotees in the temple had had a name such as this. The Book of Proverbs does imply that this term was used: 'Do not forsake [Wisdom], and she will keep you; love her and she will guard you' (Prov. 4.6); 'He who loves Wisdom makes his father glad' (Prov. 29.3). Philolaus associated masculine divinities with the triangle and feminine with the square, which coincides with the older temple tradition. The LORD was enthroned in the temple between the two creatures, or appeared as three angels (Gen. 18), and the Living One was a fourfold presence.[27] Burkert said of this example: 'One might be tempted to ignore all this as a side growth on the main stem of Pythagorean Wisdom, but more careful examination reveals that this kind of lore is to be recognised not as a branch but as a root, and one which goes very deep.'[28] The Fourfold Living One, as Ezekiel described her in his vision, contained within herself all life, and in Proverbs 8.30 she was described as the Bond or Harmony of the Creation. She was the Mother of the sons of God, the angelic powers.[29] The Pythagoreans used to invoke the *tetraktys* as their most binding oath: 'Nay by him that gave our generation the *tetraktys*, which contains the fount and roots of eternal nature' (e.g. Aetius 1.3.8, but this was frequently quoted).[30] A likely origin for the *tetraktys* is Ezekiel's Fourfold Living One, and so Burkert's conclusion about Pythagoras, drawn from completely different evidence, is significant. The picture of Pythagoras that emerges from the most ancient testimony not influenced by Plato is that he was a 'hierophant of the Great Mother mysteries ...'[31]

Pythagoras was remembered as a shaman-like figure,[32] concerned for the purity of sacrifices and the correct dress to wear in holy places. His disciples were remembered as 'prophets of the voice of God' (*mantias theo phonas*, Diogenes Laertius 8.14). His movement was primarily religious, but concerned also with theories about the nature of the world.[33] A surface reading of the Old Testament could identify the concern for pure sacrifices and correct dress in a holy place – both the Hebrew priests and the followers of Pythagoras wearing white but not

white wool – but the scientific concerns are not immediately apparent in the Old Testament. Like the Rechabites, who may well have been refugees from the first temple and its cult of the throne chariot,[34] the followers of Pythagoras drank no wine and lived a celibate life. Like the temple mystics, such as those who compiled the Enochic *Apocalypse of Weeks*, the followers of Pythagoras had a panoramic view of human history: 'There was a man among the Pythagoreans who was transcendent in knowledge ... when he extended all the powers of his intellect, he easily beheld everything as far as ten or twenty ages of the human race' (Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 30).[35] The would-be disciples of Pythagoras had a five-year period of probation during which they were permitted only to hear the master's voice but not to see him. Then 'they both heard and saw Pythagoras himself *within the veil*'.[36]

Josephus described the Essenes as leading the same kind of life as the Pythagoreans (*Ant.* 15.371), and since he had spent some time in his youth with the Essenes (*Life* 2), he will have been well informed. Both groups lived in 'silent' communities, both held goods in common, both refused to swear oaths, both practised a morning ritual of praying towards the rising sun, all practices which could be observed by outsiders. Since, however, both groups also refused to divulge their characteristic teachings to anyone outside, and Josephus did not become a full member of the group, it will never be possible to know the full extent of the similarities between the Essenes and the Pythagoreans.[37]

One important characteristic of the Qumran community, who were probably Essenes, was their opposition to the temple in Jerusalem, and in particular to the high priesthood there. This was usually described as the Wicked Priest who robbed the poor and defiled the temple, e.g. as described in the Habakkuk commentary (1QpHab VIII, XII). The Community saw themselves as both a temple and a priesthood in exile,[38] their inner council being the holy of holies.[39] They had a text (11Q Melch) which predicted the imminent return of Melchizedek, the eternal high priest of the first temple who had been present in the kings (reincarnated? Ps. 110.4), and was also recognized in Jesus (Heb. 7.11). The Melchizedek text mentions 'teachers who had been hidden and kept secret',[40] the Damascus Document mentions 'the hidden things in which all Israel had gone astray' (CD III) and also describes the era of the second temple as the age of wrath (CD I). The community looked to a Righteous Teacher, and, since they had preserved the *Enoch* texts which also described the second temple teachers as an apostate generation, we can assume that they regarded themselves as having preserved the teachings of the first temple. *These people, waiting for the return of the true high priest and the true teachings, were those whose lifestyle resembled that of the Pythagoreans.*

The most striking example of a correspondence between the tradition

of the first temple and that attributed to the Pythagoreans is the belief that there was a fire at the centre of the universe, described by Kingsley as 'one of the most vexed questions in the history of Greek philosophy'.[41] What is described as the beliefs of the Pythagoreans, however, is *exactly the lore of the holy of holies in the first temple.* This extraordinary fact is the context in which other less obvious similarities must be considered. The whole matter is complicated by the paucity of sources, and by the uncertain channels through which the ideas on both sides were transmitted. It has been suggested that this central fire derived from the experience of volcanic phenomena in Sicily, or perhaps from Empedocles' theory of a fire at the centre of the earth, but this does not explain the imagery used.[42] Anatolius, writing in Alexandria in the third century CE on the symbolic properties of numbers, said the Pythagoreans taught 'that at the centre of the four elements there lies a certain unitary fiery cube . . .'.[43] He adds a quotation from Homer to show that he understood the fiery cube to be Tartarus. One aspect of the problem, if we adopt the volcanic phenomena explanation, is to explain how the centre of the earth became the centre of the universe, *and then how it came to be described as a cube.* A second aspect of the problem is that the central fire had various names: it was *Dios phulake*, Zeus' sentry post (Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 293b). A quotation from Aristotle's lost work *On the Pythagoreans* gives more names:

> The more genuine members of the school regard fire at the centre as the creative force which gives life to the whole earth and warms its cold parts. Some call it *Zenos purgos*, Zeus' defence tower, *Dios phulake*, and *Dios thronos*, throne of Zeus. (Simplicius, *On the Heavens* 511.26)[44]

According to Philolaus it was '*hestia tou pantos*, the hearth of the universe, *Dios oikos*, the house of Zeus, the mother of the gods, the altar, bond and measure of nature' (*Aetius* 2.7.7). Plato described it as the home of Zeus and the gods: 'And he gathered all the gods together in their most honourable home which stands at the centre of the universe and watches over everything that belongs to the world of becoming' (*Critias* 121c2–3). 'This idea of the centre of the universe as a watch post is particularly striking; usually in Greek the idea of the gods "watching over" the world of mortals is associated with a view from high up in the heavens, not from the centre of the universe.'[45]

Kingsley observed: 'To call the Pythagorean central fire the throne or home of Zeus is incomprehensible from the standpoint of Greek mythology.'[46] A fiery cube at the centre of the universe, however, which is the throne and home of God, describes exactly the holy of holies in the first temple. The tabernacle/temple represented the creation, and the holy of holies was the cube-shaped structure at the heart of it that was the place of the divine presence in its midst. It was the place of the heavenly throne and the heavenly hosts, and a Greek

would have described it as 'the throne of Zeus' and 'the home of the gods'. The holy of holies was lined with gold (1 Kgs 6.20) to represent the fire around the King in his beauty (Isa. 33.14, 17), described in the earliest known ascent text as 'the second house built with tongues of fire' (*1 En.* 14.15). The holy of holies was described as a tower: in Isaiah 5.2,[47] *migdal* (LXX, *purgos*), and in Habakkuk 2.1 *masor* (LXX, *phulake*), the very words used to describe the fiery centre of the universe. Ezekiel's vision of the throne suggests that the holy of holies was seen as the Mother of the sons of God,[48] and that the holy of holies was the place of the measurements and engravings of the creation.[49] It was the place from which the LORD looked out onto the created world: 'The LORD is in his holy temple, The LORD's throne is in heaven, his eyes behold, his eyelids test, the children of men' (Ps. 11.4). That this was the holy of holies of the first temple which passed into the teachings of Pythagoras is consistent with evidence in a much later source. Anatolius also observed that the Pythagoreans equated the number One with this centre, and with the present moment.[50] The holy of holies was the ever-present eternity in the midst of the creation. As Day One and also as the Living One, it was the Mother of the gods, the bond and measure of nature and the source of life. Since the place where the atonement blood was offered was also within the holy of holies, it was also the altar. *This degree of correspondence cannot be coincidence.* Temple usage derived from mythology and temple practice is attested elsewhere but the origin and framework of the Pythagorean system remains a mystery even though commentators frequently conclude that there must have been a mythology underlying the teachings of Pythagoras.

The Pythagoreans also held that the creation was made from two: the Limit *peras* and the Unlimited *apeiron*, which corresponds in a remarkable degree to the teaching of the non-Deuteronomic stratum of Hebrew religion. For the Pythagoreans, Limit was unity, goodness and rest (and an odd number), and was also thought to be three-dimensional.[51] Unlimited was the opposite (and an even number).

> The Pythagoreans have said there are two principles (*archai*) ... [but added] that the limited (*peperasmenon*) and the unlimited (*apeiron*) [and the Unity (*to hen*)] were not the attributes of certain things, e.g. of fire or earth or anything else of this kind, but that the Unlimited itself and the One itself were the substance (*ousia*) of the things of which they are predicated. This is why number was the substance of all things. (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A5 987a)

This implies that the Limit was the One.

Elsewhere it is recorded that the One was formed from Limit and Unlimited:

> They hold that the elements of number are the even and the odd, and of these the former is *apeiron*, unlimited and the latter *peperasmenon*, limited. The One is from both

of them, for it is both even and odd, and Number from the One and Numbers, as has been said, are the whole heaven (*Metaphysics* A5 986a)

Some two centuries earlier, Deutero-Isaiah had said of the heavens: 'Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these. He who brings out their host by *bmspr* . . .' (Isa. 40.26 which could be understood as 'causes their host to come forth by means of number'). This implies that the Limit and the Unlimited together formed the One, which was the source of the creation. Aristotle criticised the Pythagoreans for this teaching:

It is strange also to attribute generation to eternal things, or rather, this is one of the things that are impossible. There need be no doubt whether the Pythagoreans attribute generation to them or not; for they obviously say that when the One (*hen*) had been constructed (whether out of planes or of surface or of seed or of elements which they cannot express), immediately the nearest part of the Unlimited began to be drawn in and limited by the Limit. (*Metaphysics* N3 1091a)

If the One was the first to be formed from Limit and Unlimited, this would correspond to Day One.[52] Several Pythagorean teachings about the One suggest that it was originally the holy of holies which was Day One. It was envisaged as three-dimensional, it was Good, it was the fiery cube, it was the first to be created and it was hermaphrodite.[53]

Understood as the Limit and the Unlimited, these are strange expressions, but as 'bound' and 'unbound' they immediately indicate the eternal covenant of the priestly tradition. The 'bonds' of the eternal covenant (also described as the covenant of *šalom*, meaning peace, wholeness, integrity), characterize the older creation story in the Hebrew Scriptures. The boundary or limit was fundamental to this system; the disordered was limited and defined by 'engraving' and fixing. This process is indicated by the words from the root *ḥqq*, although this is not clear from the variety of ways the word is translated into English:[54] the LORD set *bounds* for the sea (Job 38.10; Jer. 5.22) and *ordinances* for the heavens (Job 38.33; *bounds* Ps. 148.6), *bounds* to the length of human life (Job 14.5) and a *set limit* (Job 14.13),[55] *drew* a circle on the face of the deep (Prov. 8.27), he *described* a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness (Job 26.10),[56] assigned to the sea its *limit* and *marked out* the foundations of the earth (Prov. 8.29), made a *decree* for the rain (Job 28.26). The *Prayer of Manasseh* described this vividly: 'Thou who hast made heaven and earth with all their order; who hast shackled the sea by thy word of command, who hast confined the deep and sealed it with thy terrible and glorious Name' (*Prayer* 3). *1 Enoch* preserves fragments of a poem about the eternal covenant, and the great 'oath' which forms the heavens and the earth, maintains the bounds of the sea and keeps the sun, moon and stars in their courses (*1 En.* 69). When these bounds

were transgressed, the whole created order collapsed: 'They have passed over the laws [*toroth*], overstepped the *statutes* [but Heb. is singular, the *boundary/limit*], made ineffectual the everlasting covenant' (Isa. 24.5, translating literally). The 'Unbound' was the 'deep', which flooded over the earth in the time of Noah as a result of human wickedness, but did not exist in the new creation of John's vision: 'A new heaven and a new earth ... and the sea was no more' (Rev. 21.1). Everything was within the holy of holies and so it was all 'Limit'. Binding/limiting the sea was the great sign of divine power (Job 26.10; 38.10; Jer. 5.22; Prov. 8.27,29; also Ps. 104.9 using another word for boundary, *g'bul)*.[57] The Pythagoreans similarly conjectured that 'Evil belongs to the unlimited and good to the limited' (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* B6 1106b).

The Limit was the essential nature of anything, as can be seen from the Pythagoreans' account of the creation. If their system was like that of the temple, then the heaven would have been the veil, the boundary around the One, and so 'What lies beyond the heaven is the Unlimited ...' would have been the deep in the darkness outside the veil (Gen. 1.2). This Unlimited 'is taken in and limited', i.e. by the Limit (*Physics* 203a). The fullest description of the process is also the most obscure: 'The Pythagoreans held that the void exists and that spirit and void enter into the heaven itself which as it were, breathes forth. The void (*kenon*) separates the natures' (*Physics* 213b). This 'obviously corrupt wording'[58] could once have been an account like that in Genesis 1, if we understand the Limit to be the Creator, and the Unlimited to be whatever the Spirit hovered over in order to create.[59] The Spirit, by extending the divine influence, brought Limit to the Unlimited and established the order of creation in so far as each nature was separated and distinguished.

The first stage of this process in the biblical account was Day One, the Pythagorean One from which all things came forth. What lies beyond heaven, i.e. outside the veil of the temple, is Unlimited until the Limit beyond brings order, and thus a part of itself, into the process. The earlier account of the creation, underlying Genesis, described a process of generation, 'These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created' (Gen. 2.4) – but the fatherhood element had been suppressed by the reformers.[60] *This is exactly the teaching for which Aristotle had criticized the Pythagoreans, namely, that they attributed generation to eternal things.* The similarities to the older temple tradition are clear. The Pythagoreans thus believed that the creation had a beginning, and Philolaus also taught that the cosmos would be destroyed (*Aetius* 2.5.3), another parallel with the Hebrew tradition (e.g. Isa. 51.6). Pythagoras was the first to use *kosmos* (meaning an ordered state) of the universe (*Aetius* 2.1.1),[61] another biblical element (Isa. 45.18, and the whole of Gen. 1). The end of the Genesis story was that what had been created and separated out was *good*, and that all was

at *rest* on the Sabbath. The goal of the Hebrew creation story was order and rest, not motion, and the Unity, Goodness and Rest of the Pythagoreans can easily be linked to Day One, the holy of holies.

The Pythagoreans believed that the numbers were the principles of all things:

> The so-called Pythagoreans were the first to take up mathematics. They advanced this study and having been brought up in it, they thought its principles were the principles of all things ... In numbers they thought they observed many resemblances to the things that are and that come to be ... such and such an attribute of numbers being justice ... another being decisive moment ... since all other things seem to be made in the likeness of numbers in their entire nature.' (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A5 985b)

The Pythagorean numbers remain a mystery; Burkert even wondered if 'a quite specific mythical cosmogony forms the background of the Pythagorean number theory'.[62] 'Their numbers are 'mathematical' and yet, in view of their spatial, concrete, nature, they are not. They seem to be conceived as matter (*hule*), and yet they are something like form (*eidos*). They are, in themselves, being (*ousia*), and yet not quite so.'[63] How the One became the Many, the Numbers of the creation, is not clear, but in temple tradition, this would have been one of the secrets of the holy of holies. It was the *raz nihyeh* of the Qumran Wisdom texts.[64] It is therefore very interesting to read that the first secret revealed to Enoch when he stood before the throne was 'the *division* of the kingdom' (*1 En.* 41.1), since 'the kingdom' was one of the names by which the holy of holies was known.[65] Isaiah observed the Holy One bringing out the host of heaven 'by number' (Isa. 40.26), a familiar text whose meaning is not immediately obvious. It could be describing how the first created beings were somehow associated with number.

Pythagoras is also known for his teaching about the transmigration of souls, although which souls and under what conditions is not certain.

> He maintains that the soul is immortal; next that it changes into other kinds of living things, also that events recur in certain cycles and that nothing is ever absolutely new and finally that all living things should be regarded as kin. Pythagoras seems to have been the first to bring these beliefs to Greece. (Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 19)

'Transmigration of souls' is not a term used in discussing biblical religion, but it could have derived from the Hebrew belief in the return of major figures such as Elijah, or the great prophets. The evidence in the gospels is late ('Some say you are John the Baptist and others Elijah, others Jeremiah or one of the prophets', Matt. 16.14), but the whole phenomenon of pseudepigraphy is ancient and has yet to be explained. It may have been based on the belief that the great figure actually returned in another lifetime to write these texts, and returned many times. Who wrote the books of Moses? And who rewrote parts of them to produce Deuteronomy?

The scrolls of the prophets were augmented over the years by unknown figures whom we call 'disciples', but they may well have believed themselves to be the new embodiment of their master, giving new oracles. 'Coming in/with the Name of the LORD' is another phrase to ponder, since all the kings were believed to be Immanuel, God with his people. And what of Melchizedek, the eternal priest, who met Abraham, 'was' David and 'was' Jesus? There was also the established practice of writing contemporary history as the past repeating itself. The return from the exile was a new creation, a new Exodus, and also a new migration of Abraham; Isaiah 51 uses all three images. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE was described as the first destruction, witnessed by Jeremiah's scribe Baruch (*2 Baruch*), and 'Ezra' writing the Scripture in the mid-fifth century BCE was in fact the account of the collection of the Hebrew Scriptures and the fixing of the canon at the end of the first century CE: (*2 Esdr.* 3.1 'In the thirtieth year after the destruction of our city'; *2 Esdr.* 14 describes how Ezra dictated the Scriptures to scribes).

Pythagoras is said to have taught about *daimones*, beings intermediate between humans and God, and to have believed himself to be midway between ordinary humans and God (Aristotle, *Fragment* 192). Pythagoras was remembered as divine and his teachings were held to be of divine origin (Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 5), and the Pythagoreans claimed to be able to see *daimones* (Aristotle, *Fragment* 193). This bears a strong resemblance to the belief in apotheosis attested in the non-canonical texts of the Hebrew tradition. Certain humans were transformed and became mediators, usually of heavenly secrets or messages of judgement. That angels could be seen was never questioned.

Pythagoras also taught about the music of the spheres, later understood to mean the sound of the moving heavenly bodies[66] (criticized by Aristotle, *On the Heavens* B9 290b12: 'The theory that the movement of the stars produces a harmony ... is nevertheless untrue'). This resembles the Hebrew tradition of the song of the angels, who were thought of as the stars. Job, which has preserved much from the earlier period, mentions the song of these stars/angels at the moment of the creation: 'When I laid the foundation of the earth ... the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy' (Job 38.4, 7). Later temple tradition linked music to cosmic harmony and renewal,[67] and those who stood in the Presence had to learn the song of the angels (e.g. *Ap. Abr.* 17.5–7, where Abraham has to sing the song that Iaoel taught him.) The heavenly music was the song of renewal, the sound which restored the creation, and it was the characteristic music of the holy of holies.[68] In the older account of the creation recorded in Proverbs 8, Wisdom is the one who holds things together/in harmony (Prov. 8.30 LXX, *harmozousa*).[69] The incon-

sistencies in later interpretations of Pythagoras' theory of cosmic music suggest 'that this concept has nothing to do with mathematical or musical theory but comes from a deeper root . . .'[70] in mythology not in science.[71]

A widely attested tradition also associates Pythagoras with the numerical ratios of musical intervals.[72] His musical theory was closely related to numerical cosmology, and Burkert believes that it may have been the potency of music to influence the human spirit that made this study a major element in the quest for the secrets of the universe.[73] Since the temple and tabernacle were both thought to replicate the measures of the creation, it is interesting that several people have noted the relationship between the proportions of the temple and the musical scale. The cube, with all its sides of equal length, was the note of unison, and the measurements of the great hall, in addition to those of the holy of holies, 'expressed, in ratios of architectural proportion, the same musical tones which were implicit in the unison or fundamental note of the Holy of Holies'.[74] One can prove nothing; the builders of the temple may not even have been aware of the significance of the measurements they used, but it is a fact that the measurements of the temple were deemed to be a part of the mystery of the creation, and they do fit the proposed theories of harmony.

The characteristic calendar of the temple was also related to music. 'The harmony of space' expressed in the structure of the temple 'found an equivalent embodiment in the Israelites' annual divisions of time'[75] – the seven-based calendar system, with the seven-day week, and then the seven weeks between Passover and Weeks, and then the festivals of new wine and new oil at further intervals of seven weeks,[76] then the Sabbath year after seven years and the Jubilee in the fiftieth year after seven times seven years. Seven was, without any doubt, *the* sacred number, and yet the culmination of this calendrical system was fifty: seven times seven plus one. The Sabbath year and the Jubilee were regarded as fundamental laws revealed to Moses on Sinai (Lev. 25.1), and therefore they must have been a part of the great vision of the creation which Moses had to replicate in the tabernacle. Strachan has argued that this system of 49 and 50 was based on the concept of musical harmony. Seven complete octaves, which should correspond to twelve musical fifths, in fact do not, but differ by what is known as the Pythagorean Comma, 'One of the greatest mysteries of the science of sound.' Tame suggested that this discrepancy was known to the ancient philosopher musicians, who accepted that the harmony of mortal music was imperfect and thus a sign of human imperfection. 'The Comma is not a slight interval less than the seven octaves, but in excess of them. In the ancient world this was widely conceived as a symbol of renewal.'[77] Strachan suggested that it is this 'extra' which explains the fiftieth year, the Jubilee, the addition to the seven times seven years. The significance

of the Jubilee would certainly fit the idea of restoring the cosmic harmony, since the Jubilee was a conscious return to the time and state when the Creator had finished his work and saw that everything was good.[78]

The Pythagorean Comma could also account for the disputes between the advocates of the solar and the lunar calendar, the first temple and the second. The ratio of the solar year (365.256 days) to the lunar year (354.367 days) is almost exactly the ratio of the Pythagorean Comma, the perceived distinction between heavenly and earthly harmony, perfection and imperfection.[79] The first temple had used a solar (heavenly) calendar, as did the priestly group at Qumran, whose lifestyle resembled that of the Pythagoreans. Eleven fragments of their calendar were found (4Q320–30), and the Temple Scroll shows that their year was divided into seven periods of fifty days. In their hymns they sang of the law of the Great Light of Heaven ... the certain law from the mouth of God (1QH XX, formerly XII), and they also used the *Book of Jubilees*, an alternative version of Genesis calculated in terms of Jubilees. Those whom they regarded as the apostates used the lunar calendar, proof of their fallen state.

Iamblichus records that 'What pertains to computation in numbers was discovered in Phoenicia,'[80] and, according to Neugebauer,[81] the Greek alphabetical number system must have originated whilst the Greeks were still using the full Phoenician alphabet, as three letters that did not survive in the classical Greek alphabet continued in use as numbers.[82] He suggested Miletus in Asia Minor and the eighth century BCE as the time and place for adopting these numbers. The practice of using Phoenician *letters as numbers* would then have been an established practice in the time of Pythagoras, and the root of his mathematics was also linked to Phoenicia. This could be no more than coincidence but for the later Hebrew tradition of *describing the creation in terms of letters*. The best-known example is from (the much later) *3 Enoch* 13, where Metatron, the exalted and transformed Enoch, describes his crown on which were inscribed 'the letters by which heaven and earth were created'. In so far as they were on his high priestly crown, they would have been the four letters of the Name, but other sources record that all twenty-two letters were used to create.[83] The setting of this scene is important; Enoch/Metatron is being transformed into a heavenly prince, exalted above the angels of Day One (*3 En.* 14). This is a development of the royal rituals in the holy of holies, which appear elsewhere as the traditions of Moses on Sinai. Now on Sinai Moses was told the Law, the plan for the tabernacle, the future history of his people and all *the measurements* of the creation (*2 Baruch* 59). Josephus said of the tabernacle, having described its precise measurements: 'This proportion of the measures of the tabernacle proved to be an imitation of the system of the world' (*Ant.* 3.123).

This is where we must look for the roots of the Pythagorean link between 'science and religion' or between 'ethics and mathematics'. The confusion about Pythagoras' use of 'numbers' may stem from the ambiguities of the Hebrew word *sepher*, which can mean far more than just 'number'. Words from this root can mean cipher, or story, or account, or decree or lawbook, to count, and to describe.[84] If Pythagoras taught that all things were number, this may have arisen from the structure of the Hebrew language: to count and to describe are the same verb, number and story are the same word.[85] This would be consistent with another curiosity about the teaching of Pythagoras: the odd number was good and the even number was not. This is contrary to the natural sense of these words in Greek, where *artios*, 'even number' has the meaning of complete, perfect, precise, and *perissos*, 'odd number' has the meaning of excessive, surplus or superfluous. 'Thus Greek terminology for even and odd is in its tendency diametrically opposite to the Pythagoreans' number theory.'[86] It is generally agreed that Pythagoras' teachings originated outside Greece; the range of meanings of the Hebrew *spr* is consistent with Iamblichus' view that 'What pertains to computation in numbers was discovered in Phoenicia.'[87]

Burkert also suggested that the Pythagoreans were the first to connect mathematics and philosophy.[88] Kirk expressed this as the bond between religion and science: 'Religion and science were not, to Pythagoras, two separate departments, between which there was no contact, but rather two inseparable factors in a single way of life.' He quoted Proclus on Euclid: 'Pythagoras turned geometrical philosophy into a form of liberal education by seeking its first principles in a higher realm of reality.' 'Several passages in Aristotle even suggest a close connexion in Pythagoreanism between mathematics and ethics.'[89] It might be more accurate to say that Pythagoras was keeping to the older ways, that he did not separate mathematics, philosophy and ethics.

The only biblical writer who claims to have been a priest in the first temple is Ezekiel.[90] Since his prophecies are dated exactly to the period when Pythagoras could have been in Palestine, anything in them will be of great significance. Ezekiel has no obvious account of the creation, but there is a long and detailed description of the temple. Since the tabernacle/temple was built to represent the creation, what he says about the temple will indicate something of his understanding of the creation. The recurring emphasis is on *the measurements*. Ezekiel sees an angel with a line of flax and a measuring reed (Ezek. 40.3), and he learns exactly how the temple should be, and how the land should be. Everything is in terms of measurements. He has to give the people an accurate account of what he has seen, in order that they may be ashamed of their iniquities and 'measure the proportion/measurement'. He has to teach them the form of the house and its proportion, its exits

and entrances, and all its forms and all its statutes ('engraved things'), and all its forms and all its laws. He has to write them 'before their eyes', so that they keep all the 'form and all the statutes and do them' (Ezek. 43.10–11, translating literally). Two of the words used here *ṣrh*, *ḥqh* are words to consider carefully: *ṣrh* is used elsewhere to indicate the heavenly 'form',[91] and words related to *ḥqq/ḥqh* are used in the older accounts of the creation, as we have seen, to indicate the fixed order and limits of what has been established. It is possible that what Ezekiel sees here is the measurements of the temple as the heavenly pattern which the whole of creation and human society has to copy. Making people ashamed of their iniquities implies more than a simple deviation in the matter of temple architecture.[92]

Ezekiel seems to describe the measurements and proportions which the temple exemplifies, and so the 'form' and the 'fixed order' of the temple issues in the fixed orders and laws of society. Ezekiel's vision of measurements includes not only the temple but also the just division of the land (Ezek. 48) and the just basis of commerce, with fair weights and measures (Ezek. 45.10–12). This is consistent with the evidence in later sources as to what Moses had learned on Sinai. Given that this Moses tradition had absorbed the older holy of holies tradition,[93] Moses learned the laws for human society, the prescriptions for the tabernacle which represented the creation, and the measurements: of the sanctuary, the abyss, the winds, the raindrops, the air, the eras of history, the angels. Moses also learned about judgement, wisdom, understanding and knowledge (*2 Baruch* 59.4–11).[94] The secrets of the older holy of holies had concerned the mystery at the heart of creation, and this was the measurements of creation and history, and the rules for society.

The older biblical account of the creation (set out clearly in Proverbs 8.22–31, Isaiah 40.12–24 and Job 26 and 38, but apparent elsewhere too in older texts) *also centred on numbers*: the weight of the wind and the measure of the waters (Job 28.25), the dimensions of the foundations of the earth and the number of the clouds (Job 38.5, 37). 'Measurements' were important: limit, height, depth, breadth (Job 11.7–9). Isaiah depicted the power of the Creator in terms of his measuring: 'Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales ...?' (Isa. 40.12). He brings out the stars by number (Isa. 40.26). The LORD measured the earth (Hab. 3.6). The nations of the world were divided up to correspond to the number of the sons of God (Deut. 32.8).[95] The boundary or limit was also fundamental to this older system; the disordered was limited and defined by 'engraving' and fixing. This process is indicated by the words from the root *ḥqq* (used by Ezekiel in the context of the correct form of the temple and the laws which expressed this). This is exactly what Ezekiel implied; the statutes had been broken.

The anointed angel figure who was thrown from heaven was described as the seal of perfection or the one who sealed *the measurement/proportion* (Ezek. 28.12),[96] interesting in the light of the word play in the *Gospel of Philip*: 'Messiah has two meanings – the anointed one or the measured' (CG II.3.62).[97] Philo described the Logos as the seal, the archetypal idea, *archetypos idea*, the pre-measurer, *prometretes*, of all things (*On Gen.* 1.4). The measurements of the temple and the temple city continued to be important, as can be seen from the fragments of the new Jerusalem texts found at Qumran,[98] the Mishnah tractate *Middoth* which is entirely devoted to temple measurements and the usage in the Merkavah texts, where measurement, *middah*, has the sense of 'mystery'. 'Akiva my son, descend and bear witness of this measurement/mystery [*middah*], to the creatures. R. Akiva descended and taught the creatures this mystery/measurement [*middah*]' (#686).[99] It would be interesting to know what 'mysteries' the young Pythagoras had learned, especially as Iamblichus observed in his *Life of Pythagoras*: 'It is said that what pertains to computation and numbers was discovered in Phoenicia.'[100]

There is no hint of these measurements in Genesis 1; all that remains of the older system is the emphasis on dividing and separating. The Unity of Day One manifested itself in the visible world as a diversity. There is an unmistakable similarity, though, between the process of creation as described in Genesis 1 and teaching attributed to Pythagoras. The Unlimited, unitary and undifferentiated was 'outside the heaven' and penetrated the world by 'being breathed in by the heaven to separate natural things (*phuseis*) from one another, being enclosed and partitioned off (*enapolambanomenon*) in the limited'.[101] If one understands 'heaven' as the veil of the temple, and the undifferentiated Unity as Day One, the holy of holies, then the Spirit coming through the veil in order to bring life and to separate 'according to their kinds' makes a striking similarity.

The older Hebrew system appears in greater detail in the non-canonical texts: *2 Baruch* 59.4–12 lists the weights, measures and quantities of the creation revealed to Moses on Sinai.[102] The *Parables of Enoch* show this knowledge in its original context, the holy of holies. Enoch stands by the throne and sees how the kingdom is divided (*1 En.* 41.1), i.e. how the Unity is separated out into the creation. He then sees how the winds are divided, and the fixed orbits of the sun and moon, the weighing of the stars and the proportions of their light (*1 En.* 43.2). There is a similar list in *1 Enoch* 60: the first and the last in heaven, the height, the depth, how the winds are divided and weighed, the power of the light of the moon and the division of the stars. Such knowledge is promised to the righteous at the end of the seventh week in the *Apocalypse of Weeks*: the breadth and length of the earth and the measure of all of them ... the height of heaven and on what it is founded and how great is the number of the stars, and where the luminaries rest ... (*1 En.* 93.11).

Nothing can be proved, but there are striking similarities between the teachings attributed to Pythagoras and his disciples, and the traditions of the first temple priesthood. This can be seen even more clearly in Plato's *Timaeus*, widely believed to depict Pythagorean beliefs.

Timaeus

The historical setting of the *Timaeus* is the late fifth century, not later than 421 BCE, and Timaeus himself is depicted as an old man, perhaps a third generation Pythagorean, and so a contemporary of Philolaus.[103] The actual dialogue was written towards the end of Plato's life, in the 360s, and is remarkable for several reasons: it is the earliest Greek account of a divine creation, stars appear here for the first time as divinities,[104] and it is a theological work, but with no name for God. The *Timaeus* describes the processes of the creation before the appearance of the visible world; much of it therefore deals with Day One, and any correspondence would be with the secret tradition. Although later texts show in some detail that the secrets of the holy of holies concerned the initial processes of the creation, the antiquity of the belief is confirmed by Job 38. Job could not claim to be wise because he had not witnessed the foundation of the earth and its measurements, nor had he heard the sons of God, the morning stars, singing as the world was formed, nor had he seen limits imposed on the sea. He could not bind the stars in their orbits nor number the clouds. Ezekiel's equivalent vision, as he was handed the scroll, was a vision of the Living One.[105] *The* Timaeus *uses the same term Living One and seems to be setting out the same mythology in scientific dress. Ezekiel's prophecies are dated to exactly the period when Pythagoras would have been in Syria, and the remarkable similarities have to be explained.* The *Timaeus* could be even closer to Pythagoras than the lore preserved in Philolaus and elsewhere, because it 'originated' only two generations after Pythagoras and is not a series of disjointed fragments, many of which were preserved by a critic and a rival, and all of which passed through several hands.

The *Timaeus* was much used by Philo; parts of his exposition of Genesis, *On the Creation of the World*, are simply quotations.[106] Philo identifies Timaeus' Demiurge with the God of the Hebrew Scriptures, but this is not the same as saying that he was the first to do this,[107] or that it was a simple correspondence. Aristobulus, writing early in the second century BCE, implied that the *Timaeus* had been based on Hebrew sources: '[Moses] has been very carefully followed in all by Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato, who said that they heard the voice of God when they were contemplating the arrangement of the universe so accurately made and indissolubly combined by God.'[108] When Philo recognized the Demiurge as the Creator depicted in the Hebrew Scriptures, he knew that those Scriptures had also spoken of a Second

God, the Logos. The early Christians read the Hebrew Scriptures in the same way, but modern scholars by and large do not. They still find only one God in the Hebrew Scriptures, and thus have problems relating the *Timaeus* to the Bible, other than through the route of Philo adapting the Hebrew Scriptures. When Philo wrote of the Father and Maker (e.g. *Creation* 7, 10, 21), he was not simply copying the *Timaeus*: the ancient Song of Moses had described the Father, Begetter, Maker and Establisher of his people (Deut. 32.6). Philo distinguished carefully between the One who was Father of the universe, and the Second God, his Logos, in whose image the human was made, 'for nothing mortal can be made in the likeness of the Most High One and Father of the universe' (*Questions on Gen.* 2.62). This Second God corresponded to Timaeus' Living Creature, the model for the visible creation.

It used to be thought that whatever had no parallel in the early Rabbinic writings must have been imported from the Greek philosophers,[109] but this approach belongs to the history of scholarship. Rabbinic Judaism is now recognized as *a substantive change from second temple Judaism.* 'Far from being trustees of the accepted tradition of Israel, the sages were leaders of a bold reform movement that developed in the aftermath of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, and took its shape in the first centuries of the Common Era.'[110] The implications of this are enormous. The polemic against the Second God which characterized so much early Rabbinic writing[111] can be recognized as a struggle within the Hebrew tradition and not as a struggle against Hellenization. Philo's Second God was no innovation, but an expression in the Greek language of what had been Hebrew temple tradition from the time of the monarchy. What Philo said about the Second God is important evidence for the nature and role of that Second God, and *the fact that there are so many similarities to the* Timaeus *is no longer proof that Philo simply adapted Plato.* Philo's Logos was the LORD of the Hebrew Scriptures, 'the antecedent to all that has come into existence' (*Abraham* 6), 'the archangel ... neither uncreated as God nor created as you, but midway between the two extremes' (*Heir* 205–06), 'the eldest and most all-embracing of all created things' (*All. Int.* 3.175). The Logos was the high priest (thus linking the tradition to the temple), the Firstborn (*Abraham* 102), 'the Image of God through whom the whole universe was framed' (*Spec. Laws* 1.81), 'the Bond of all things' (*Flight* 112), 'the Covenant' (*Dreams* 2.237), 'the Seal' (*Flight* 12). The Logos divided and kept things distinct (*Heir* 130), as well as uniting them. The Logos (a masculine noun), was also Wisdom (a feminine noun), but Philo had no problem with this: 'Let us pay no heed to the discrepancy in the gender of the words, but say that the daughter of God is not only masculine but also father, sowing and begetting in souls the aptness to learn ...' (*Flight* 52). In this Philo is consistent with the tradition of the Second God having both genders. Briefly, Wisdom and

Logos are both heavenly beings, both are linked to the symbol of the menorah, both are the Image, both are the Firstborn, both are agents of the creation, both are bonds of creation, both were given Israel as their inheritance, both served in the temple, i.e. as high priests, both led souls to God and transformed them. This list is not exhaustive, but, as I wrote some time ago, those who would distinguish Logos from Wisdom have a hard case to argue.[112]

What I am proposing reverses the established ideas of cause and effect. Philo was not simply adapting the Hebrew tradition to a more fashionable Greek model. The problems do not lie in bridging the thought worlds of Plato and Genesis in the time of Philo, but in trying to establish what lay beneath the surface form of Genesis and establishing the bridge, centuries before Philo, between the older Hebrew tradition and the *Timaeus*, exactly as Aristobulus and others had claimed. Runia made the usual assumption when he wrote, 'In attempting to explain Moses by means of Plato's Timaeus, Philo certainly did not solve all the exegetical problems involved',[113] but later recognized:

> Neither the Middle Platonist use of *Tim.* 41ab nor the Stoic doctrine of cosmic cohesion can fully explain Philo's frequent use of the image of the *desmos* (bond) in relation to the Logos and the powers of God. So it is difficult to determine whether we are dealing with a personal predeliction (at least partly resulting from his reading of the *Timaeus*) or with one of the many gaps in our knowledge of Philo's philosophical reading material.[114]

A gap in our knowledge of his 'Judaism' is not considered! Philo drew his bonds from the older creation tradition, which also gave him the image of the seal. When discussing Philo's 'shift in imagery' to include that of the seal and its imprint, where the ideas are regarded as seals which stamp their form on the unformed, Runia could find no obvious source. 'The description of the ideas as seals and the model as the archetypal seal is quite unPlatonic, and is to be attributed to Middle Platonist interpretation.'[115] It was in fact a fundamental part of the imagery of the first temple, the seal of the Name, the letters by which the world was created, being worn by the high priest, and the guardian angel being regarded as the 'seal' of perfection or proportion.[116]

The first temple had known El Elyon, God Most High and Father of the sons of God, whose Firstborn had been Yahweh, the LORD, the Great Angel, the Holy One of Israel. The high priest king in Jerusalem had been Immanuel, the presence of the Great Angel with his people. He had become divine at his anointing, and had been given the four names: 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace', names which became in the Greek simply 'the Angel of Great Counsel' (Isa. 9.6). Alongside this – and there is insufficient evidence to see the scheme whole or even to see it with the eyes of

those who recorded the little we have – there had been the female aspect of God Most High, the Queen of Heaven and Mother of the sons of God,[117] who had been the Mother of the LORD and therefore also of the earthly high priest king. But the LORD also had a female aspect; the Second God was both male and female, as Philo knew. In Timaeus' muddled account, the Demiurge corresponds to God Most High, and the Eternal Living Creature corresponds to the Second God.[118]

Timaeus himself is introduced as an astronomer who has studied the nature of the universe from the origin of the cosmic system to the creation of the human (*Tim.* 27a). A comparison of his account of the creation and what can be recovered of 'The Older Testament'[119] reveals some extraordinary similarities. Timaeus begins his account with a series of statements: that one must distinguish between what 'is and never becomes' from what 'is always becoming but never is', between the changing and the eternal; that a pattern is necessary for the product to be good; that anything which changes must have had a beginning and so the visible creation must have been brought into being; and that both the world and creator are good. These premises, which the dialogue does not question, could all have originated in the Hebrew tradition. The distinction between the eternity of God and the transient nature of physical life and human history is a commonplace in the Hebrew Scriptures. 'The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand for ever' (Isa. 40.8). 'The heavens will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be for ever, and my deliverance will never be ended' (Isa. 51.6; also Pss 9.6–7; 33.10–11; 37.18–20; 90.1–10; 102.11–12; 104.31–32). The divine pattern to which the craftsman works is fundamental to the accounts of the tabernacle and the temple, which represented the creation.[120] Genesis begins with the story of how the world was created by God, and the recurring theme is that the creation was good. That God is good is fundamental to the Hebrew Scriptures. There was no envy, *phthonos*, in Timaeus' God (*Tim.* 29e), and it was deemed necessary to make this point twice; Timaeus' Creator was different from the Greek gods. 'Timaeus is thinking of the common Greek view that *to theion* is *phthoneron*, "grudging" in its bestowal of good things'.[121] Pythagoras had, apparently, been the first to call the heaven, *ouranos*, the cosmos, *kosmos* (Diogenes Laertius 8.48, the word used here by *Tim.* 28b). According to Burnet the older meaning of *kosmos* had been the battle array of an army.[122] If these two statements are correct, then Pythagoras' choice of *kosmos* probably reflected the Hebrew 'host', *ṣaba'*, the old name for the host of heaven which was the first to be created, or rather generated (Gen. 2.1; Isa. 40.26). The Creator was the LORD of Hosts, a title dropped after the work of the Deuteronomists and the changes to the temple,[123] i.e. it was the older

title. None of Timaeus' premises, then, is incompatible with an origin for his ideas in the older Hebrew tradition, and the use of *kosmos* is consistent with this.

Eusebius argued at length that Timaeus' (and therefore Plato's) premises about God were drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures.[124] Thus the distinction between what is and what becomes (*Tim.* 27d) was, he said, simply an expansion of Exodus 3.14: 'Does it not plainly appear that the admirable philosopher has altered the oracle in which Moses declared "I am that I am" into "What is that which always is and has no becoming?" ' That there is only one heaven (*Tim.* 31a) was drawn from 'Hear O Israel the LORD our God is One LORD' (Deut. 6.4). That God is good (*Tim.* 29e) was also drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures: Eusebius quoted Nahum 1.7 and Psalm 106.1. Moses had anticipated the teaching about the pattern and its copy, in so far as Genesis 1 had described a light existing before the sun was created, and Timaeus' statement that the world must have had a beginning and a cause (*Tim.* 28a) simply repeated Genesis, as did the statement that the heavens and the stars were created before the earth and its creatures (*Preparation* 11.9, 13, 21, 23, 29, 30). Most significant, because this is an element of the Hebrew tradition that has been almost forgotten, Eusebius knew that there had been a 'Second Cause' 'whom the Hebrew oracles teach to be the Word of God ... Moses expressly speaks of two divine Lords ...' (*Preparation* 11.14). 'Monotheism' is usually presented as characteristic of all the Hebrew Scriptures, thus creating huge problems for understanding the origin of Christian beliefs about the Second Person. It can now be seen that 'monotheism' was a relatively late development within the Hebrew tradition, a characteristic of the Deuteronomists and the temple 'reformers', and so when the early Christians read the Hebrew Scriptures as an account of the Second Person in the history of Israel, this was not their special invention.[125] The recognition that there had been a Second Person in the older Hebrew tradition means that Eusebius could relate to the *Timaeus* with fewer problems than can a modern scholar.

Timaeus speaks of the Maker, *poietes*, and Father of the universe (*Tim.* 28c), who cannot be known, and then of the Architect, *tektainomenos*, who constructed the universe, who is also named the Demiurge. These seem to be the same Deity. An uncertain part of the text then seems to say that an exact account of the gods and the generation of the universe is not possible (*Tim.* 29c), which would be consistent with the hidden tradition of the holy of holies. The Framer, *xunistas*,[126] set up the universe of change to be good like himself. He had found the visible universe in a state of inharmonious and disorderly motion, and he had brought it to order. This is not creation *ex nihilo*. In his second account of the creation, Timaeus returns to the question of the third element: the model, the copy, and then *that into which it was*

copied (*Tim.* 49a, 50cd). This is envisaged either as a substance or as a space, containing the qualities of the four elements – earth, air, fire and water – and other things, but in a constant state of chaotic flux, 'like the contents of a winnowing basket' (*Tim.* 52de). The Creator's first action was to introduce order, 'making them out into shapes by means of forms and numbers' (*Tim.* 53b). The next process of creation in the *Timaeus* is described as binding together (*Tim.* 31c), an element which can only be recovered for the fragments of the older creation story which survive in the Hebrew Scriptures. There then follows what seems to be a description of the Eternal Living Creature, begotten by God and itself a blessed god (*Tim.* 34ab). The universe itself was also begotten by the Father, who wanted to make it as much as possible like the Eternal Living Creature (*Tim.* 37cd). Parts of this description correspond to the account in the first chapter of Genesis, where God did not create out of nothing, but, when there was darkness on the face of the waters, he brought order to the earth which was *tohu wabohu*.[127] On the seventh day he rested and saw that everything he had made was good. This account is not from the first temple priesthood,[128] but still has traces of the older tradition. 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them' (Gen. 2.1) implies the creation of the heavenly host, even though this has not been mentioned previously, and the origin of the host is implied in 'These are the *generations* of the heavens and the earth, when they were created' (Gen. 2.4). They were the offspring of the Creator, as stated in *Timaeus* 41a when God addressed the gods.

Other elements in Timaeus' account, such as God the Father and his sons, the Living Creature, and establishing the bonds of creation before the appearance of the creatures of land, air and water, can be recovered from fragments of the older creation story which have survived outside Genesis. First, the recurring theme in the *Timaeus* of God as the Father, i.e. begetter, of the Eternal Living Creature and of the universe, resembles the ancient title for El Elyon, God Most High, attested in Genesis 14.19: 'The begetter, *qnh,* of heaven and earth'. This is usually translated by the less specific 'maker' of heaven and earth. El Elyon was also Father of the sons of God (Deut. 32.8, in the Qumran text 4QDeut^{j}), just as the Demiurge was the father of the sons of God (*Tim.* 41ab). The old title for El Elyon was modified in the wake of the temple reform, as can be seen from its reuse by Deutero-Isaiah, who, as the prophet of monotheism, simply equated El and Yahweh, and made the one God male. The whole idea of divine sonship and apotheosis, which had been central to the royal cult, was democratized so that everyone was a divine son (Deut. 14.1). El Elyon, the ancient 'procreator' *qnh,* was identified as Yahweh, and the one God became the 'maker', *'śh,* rather than the procreator. The formula was expanded to 'Your maker, stretcher of the heaven and founder of the earth' (Isa. 51.13 similarly

44.24). Or Yahweh became 'creator' *br'* (Isa. 42.5), or creator and 'shaper' *yṣr* (Isa. 45.18). The old title for El was simply altered and taken over in some Psalms: 'Yahweh ... maker, *'śh* of heaven and earth' (Pss 115.15; 121.2; 124.8; 134.3).[129] The variety of descriptions of the Demiurge, especially that he was the Father of the gods and the creation, reflects the situation before the introduction of monotheism in the wake of the reforms. This suggests that the Demiurge, who fathered the Eternal Living Creature and the gods, was modelled on El Elyon. Second, there is Wisdom, the female figure described in Proverbs 8.22–31, who was begotten as the first of the Creator's works. (The Father is named as Yahweh but this may be another reassigned text.) She was with him as the visible creation was established: heaven and earth, waters and sea, but there is no mention of the three types of creature whose creation was committed to the sons of God (*Tim.* 41b). In other words, she was the companion only *in that phase of creation which corresponded to the work of the Demiurge*, and, like Timaeus' Living Being, she was the daily delight that rejoiced before him always, rejoicing in the inhabited world and her delight was with the sons of men (Prov. 8.30–31, my translation, cf. *Tim.* 37c, 'And when the Father who had begotten it, perceived that the universe was alive and in motion, a thing of joy to the eternal gods, He too rejoiced ...'). Ezekiel had described her departure from Jerusalem, his Living Creature. Third, the bonds of creation were the bonds of the eternal covenant which were renewed on the Day of Atonement.

The imagery used in the *Timaeus* to describe the soul and its bonds is that of the Day of Atonement, and is but one of the many striking similarities to the older tradition. Timaeus explained that the Soul had been formed by blending the eternal indivisible with the transient divisible, to form a third. The image used is of blending something in a bowl. Taylor suggested that this corresponded to the Pythagorean Limit (the eternal indivisible) and the Unlimited (the transient divisible) blending to form the One.[130] These three were then distributed as the Soul, divided initially into seven portions, and then into further smaller portions set between the originals. 'The complete series of terms ... is intended to correspond with the notes of a musical scale.'[131] The resulting Soul, imagined as a strip, was then divided lengthwise into two, and the two halves laid across each other to form a cross. The ends of each strip were then joined to form a circle, resulting in two circles, one within the other, set at right angles, but then tilted. The inner ring was split into seven smaller rings to be the orbits of the seven heavenly bodies – sun, moon and five planets – revolving at various speeds. This completed, the One who constructed it made the bodily within it, joining them at their centres. The body of the heaven was thus visible, but the soul, that is the reason and harmony, was not (*Tim.* 34c–37c). The soul was both in the midst and encircling.

Nobody could say that this is a clear account. Taylor described it as

> The most perplexing and difficult passage in the whole dialogue ... The language in which Timaeus describes the making of the world's soul by the mixing together of certain ingredients in a *krater* or mixing bowl ... the subsequent distribution of the product in accord with the intervals of a musical scale, and the cutting of it into strips which correspond to the celestial equator and the ecliptic, is merely symbolical.[132]

Whatever is being reported here is garbled, and justifies Aristotle's criticism of the Pythagoreans, albeit of another of their theories, that they made their science conform to their pre-existing ideas, 'not seeking accounts and explanations in conformity with appearances, but trying by violence to bring the appearances into line with accounts and opinions of their own' (*Heavens* 293a). *The underlying myth here seems to be whatever was expressed in the ritual of the Day of Atonement, when mixed bloods, representing soul, were sprinkled in the temple which represented the creation.* Now acknowledged to be one of the most ancient practices of the temple,[133] the rituals of the Day of Atonement were a part of the healing and recreation process at the New Year. The temple ritual was the act of renewal, but must have reflected the belief, now lost, as to how the world had been originally constituted. We have to compare the renewal rituals, in so far as they can be recovered, with framework into which Timaeus sets his 'scientific' account of the creation.

Deuteronomy has no place for atonement and no account of the Day of Atonement; it does not even appear in the calendar (Deut. 16). This was one of the crucial elements in the older cult which the 'reformers' suppressed. Atonement had become a controversial matter by the time the Pentateuch was compiled.[134] Although we should not expect to find in Leviticus a full and clear account of the pre-exilic practice, there is enough evidence to begin the search. Blood is the 'soul/life' *npš*, and thus it effects atonement, i.e. healing and restoration (Lev. 17.11).[135] On the Day of Atonement, blood was distributed in various parts of the tabernacle/temple, which represented the visible and invisible creation, to remove the destructive and polluting effects of sin. Two types of blood were used on the Day of Atonement: the blood of a bull, for the high priest and his house (Lev. 16.6), and the blood of a goat 'as the LORD' (Lev. 16.8). These bloods were each sprinkled seven times within the holy of holies, i.e. in Day One/eternity, and then together they were sprinkled on the altar in the great hall. The Mishnah gives more detail, presumably of how the ritual was performed at the end of the second temple period, but there is no explanation of its meaning.[136] The high priest took the blood of the bull into the holy of holies and sprinkled it where the ark had been, using a special motion 'like a whip' whilst counting out a formula: one, one and two, one and three, one and four, one and five, one and six, one and seven. He then left that blood on a stand in the great hall whilst he took the blood of the goat

into the holy of holies to perform the same ritual of sprinkling and counting. He then repeated the process in the great hall, sprinkling the bloods separately on the curtain, the heavens. He then mixed the two bloods together in a vessel, pouring the bull's blood into the goat's and then returning the mixture to the first vessel. With the mixed blood he sprinkled the golden altar in the great hall, and then the altar of sacrifice in the temple courtyard, before emptying the remainder of the blood under the outdoor altar. The high priest then uttered the Name aloud, the only time that this was done (*m. Yoma* 5.3–6.2). This is how the process of recreation was ritualized in the temple. Two types of blood, i.e. soul, were distributed separately with an inexplicable counting ritual in the holy of holies, Day One, and on the veil, the second day, and then, mixed together, they were sprinkled in the part of the temple which represented the visible creation.[137]

This ritual restored the bonds of the eternal covenant which had been broken by sin.[138] *The account in* Timaeus *immediately links the distributed soul to the bonds which encircle the creation*, and depicts these bonds as the means by which the heavenly bodies are held in their places. This binding of the heavenly bodies was part of the older creation story, as can be seen from the questions in Job: 'Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season or can you guide the Bear with its children?' (Job 38.31–32). The *Parables of Enoch* describe the process more clearly: through the great oath/bond, which is closely linked to knowledge of the Name, the heaven was suspended before the earth was created, the earth was founded and the sea kept within its bounds, the sun, moon and stars were held in their orbits and the Creator called to them by name (*1 En.* 69). On the Day of Atonement the Name was uttered at the completion of the sprinkling process, perhaps to seal what had been done. The idea of sealing the bonds was a key to the creation process as can be seen from the (undateable) *Prayer of Manasseh*, a prayer of repentance whose setting could well have been the Day of Atonement. 'Do not destroy me with my transgressions' (*Prayer* 13). Manasseh described how the deep was confined and sealed with the 'terrible and glorious Name'. In the *Book of Jubilees*, Isaac had his sons swear by the Name, the greatest oath, 'which created the heavens and the earth and all things together' (*Jub.* 36.7).[139] The Name was worn on the high priest's forehead and was the letters by which heaven and earth were created.[140] It was also represented by a cross as early as the time of Ezekiel, as can be seen from the account of the destroying angels. Those to be saved were marked by the sign of the LORD, the letter *tau*, which in Ezekiel's time was a cross (Ezek. 9.4 translated 'mark' in many English versions). Thus the bonds of the creation, in the first temple, had they been sealed with the Name, would have been sealed with a cross. This survives in the ancient rite for consecrating the nave of a

church, which corresponds to the great hall of the temple and thus to the visible creation. Two alphabets were written diagonally across the nave from corner to corner, representing the X, the seal of the Name, by which the world was created and the church was established.[141]

This is exactly what the account in *Timaeus* implies as Justin knew (*Apology* 1.60); the two strips of the world soul were bound together in the shape of a cross. Timaeus described how one of the bonds was further split to provide the seven orbits for the sun, moon and five planets, and how these seven were set to produce and mark time, 'living creatures with their bodies bound by the ties of the soul' (*Tim.* 37cd). Timaeus then explained that the pattern for this system of soul circles had been an eternal Living Being, and that the Creator determined to have an even more exact copy of her, except that the copy could not be eternal. This would be 'the moving image of eternity' (*Tim.* 37d).[142] In order to complete the copy, there needed to be as many forms of life as there were in the perfect Living Creature. 'There are four of these: the gods in heaven, birds in the air, animals that live in water, and animals that go on dry land' (*Tim.* 40a). These were the creatures of the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. Genesis 1 has only three of these: creatures of air, water and land. The fourth group, the creatures of fire, were the angels of Day One who have disappeared from our Genesis.[143] These gods were made mostly of fire, distributed as an adornment for the heavens, i.e. they were stars, and they were given two types of movement only: rotation and moving forward.

Timaeus' Living Creature, *zoon*, the pattern for the visible creation, is what Ezekiel saw leaving the temple. The prophet described what he saw as the *zoon*, singular (e.g. Ezek. 1.21, 22; 10.15, 17 LXX), or *zoa* plural (e.g. Ezek. 1.13, 14, 15 LXX) but for a divinity this is a commonplace in Hebrew. Ezekiel also described four Living Creatures as components of the One, just as in *Timaeus* 39c, 'As many as exist in the Living Creature, so many should the world possess ... and these forms are four ...' Other words in Ezekiel's descriptions suggest that he knew the distinction between the heavenly 'form' and its visible 'appearance'. Ezekiel was describing the visible form of something not normally seen (it was behind the veil in both senses), and so he distinguished between the 'form' of the rings and their 'appearance', the 'form' of the throne and its 'appearance', and so on.[144] The similarity to the role of Timaeus' Living creature is striking.

Ezekiel's text is a curious mixture of feminine and masculine word forms. S/he was surrounded by a ring within a ring, and these were full of 'eyes'.[145] Now 'eye', *'yn*, is a word with several meanings: Zechariah, some two generations after Ezekiel, described the seven lamps of the menorah as the 'eyes' of the LORD which 'wandered' through the earth (Zech. 4.10; also in 2 Chron. 16.9, but this would have been written later). These 'eyes' must have been the sun, moon and five planets.

Might these also have been the 'eyes' in the ring around the Living One? This would explain why one of Timaeus' rings was split to make orbits for the seven wandering heavenly bodies, the older mythology being modified for a more sophisticated astronomy. There is another link, too, between the 'wandering eyes' and the ritual of the Day of Atonement. If this is only coincidence, it is a curious coincidence. The high priest in the holy of holies counted one, one and one, one and two, one and three ... whilst sprinkling the creating/renewing blood with a movement 'like a whip' (*m. Yoma* 5.4). In the Mishnah the word is *mslyp*, a word not found in the Hebrew Scriptures, where *the word for 'whip' is from the same root as the word for the 'wandering' eyes*: both are *swṭ*. As the high priest used 'soul' to restore the bonds of the creation, might his movement originally have been connected to the 'wandering' stars, before he emerged from the holy of holies to restore the visible creation?[146] According to the poem in *1 Enoch* 69, the great oath kept the heaven, the earth, the sea and the sun, moon and stars securely in their places.

Some of Ezekiel's description of the Living One is beyond recovery. One verse (Ezek. 10.12) seems to describe 'all flesh', in the sense of 'all created things' as in the LORD providing for 'all flesh' (Ps. 136.25) or 'all flesh' perishing if the Spirit was withdrawn (Job. 34.15). The LORD made a covenant with 'all flesh' (Gen. 9.16). 'All flesh' together with (?)backs, hands and wings were (?)within the rings full of 'eyes'. Later texts, which preserved the older temple lore, show that 'the spirits of all things' were believed to have been created on Day One,[147] and so it is not impossible that this was the original meaning of these curious words.

Elsewhere Ezekiel describes a fe/male angel figure who was thrown from heaven and from her shrine (Ezek. 28.12–19), and his description confirms that the figure had been the 'pattern'. The poem has been reworked and now describes the king of Tyre, but originally the angel had been the guardian of Zion,[148] unless we are to believe that several angel figures left the temple and cult in Jerusalem during the time of Ezekiel. S/he had been full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, the anointed or measuring cherub who protected or overshadowed (Ezek. 28.14).[149] S/he was described as 'the seal of proportion, *toknit*', or 'the seal of the pattern, *tabnit*', (Ezek. 28.12, the two words looking similar in Hebrew). Either meaning would correspond to what we find in the *Timaeus*. This angel had become proud and had corrupted Wisdom, and so fire came forth from her midst and s/he was consumed. The 'seal' elsewhere is the role of the Servant the LORD, the high priest,[150] who held the creation together. He was the 'eternal covenant' rather than 'covenant to the people',[151] and he had been 'drawn in outline and appointed' a literal translation of *ṣrk w'thk*, RSV ' kept you and given you' (Isa. 42.6; 49.8).[152] This is the context for Philo's unPlatonic image of the seal.

The Eternal Living Creature contained all life, as did the fourfold Pythagorean *tetraktys* 'the fount and roots of eternal nature'. They must have been identical as it is unlikely that one system would have had two sources of life.[153] Now the renewal ritual of the Day of Atonement was an outpouring of life/soul to the creation, and the blood of the goat represented the life of Second God present in the high priest king. The outpouring of his life renewed the creation, hence the juxtaposition of images in Peter's sermon: 'the Holy and Righteous One, the Author of Life', followed by a description of the Day of Atonement and the Anointed One returning from heaven (Acts 3.14–15, 19–21).

At his 'birth' the king had received the throne name, which in the Greek became simply 'Angel of Great Counsel' – Wisdom – but whose Hebrew original, as we have seen, had been fourfold: 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (Isa. 9.6 RSV). Translated more literally from the Hebrew, they bear a remarkable correspondence to aspects of Timaeus' Eternal Living Creature. The similarity to Wisdom is clear, 'Wonderful Counsellor'; it must have been a god, since the universe which was its copy was a blessed god (*Tim.* 34b), 'Mighty God'; it was eternal but its copy was in time (*Tim.* 38c), 'Father of Time'; it contained all things together within itself (*Tim.* 30c), 'Prince of shalom = wholeness'.

Hengel wondered some time ago about the relationship between Jewish wisdom (not Wisdom!) speculations and analogous Greek conceptions, but did not even consider the possibility that Aristobulus (and others) had been correct when they claimed that Moses had influenced the Greeks and not vice versa. He wondered if the world soul of the *Timaeus* had influenced the depiction of Wisdom in Proverbs 8, since *harmozousa*, joining together, and *euphrainomen,* vv. 30–31 seems so very close to the *Timaeus*. Both these translations, however, are close to the Hebrew original, and the question should perhaps have been: How could the Hebrew have been so close to the ideas of the *Timaeus*? The Demiurge as a personal creator god, he suggested, would have been close to Jewish thought, and perhaps the description in *Wisdom* 7.22–8.1 had been drawn ultimately from the Timaeus . . . Such is the power of pre-supposition.[154] The description in *Wisdom* 7 probably does have much in common with the Soul of the Timaeus, but this is because the two have a common origin.

Having described the Living One who was the pattern for the creation, Timaeus' Demiurge then addressed the gods who were his first creation, the beings of fire. He was their Demiurge (maker) and Father; in other words, these beings were the sons of God. Although all that had been bound together could be dissolved again, such dissolution would not be good. 'You will never be dissolved nor taste death as long as you find my will a stronger and more sovereign bond than those with which you were bound at your birth' (*Tim.* 41b). There are echoes here

of the rebel angels, who decided to break the bond, defy the will of the Great Holy One, and bind themselves by a great oath into a bond of defiance (*1 En.* 6.4). The bonds of the sons of God and their rebellion against them was a fundamental aspect of first temple theology, e.g. 'Sons have I reared and brought up but they have rebelled against me' (Isa. 1.2 cf. Ps. 2.3).

In order to make the world a perfect replica of the Living One, the Demiurge declared, three more types of mortal had to be created: creatures in the air, creatures in the water, and creatures on the land. Since the Demiurge could only create what was immortal, the gods were commanded to create these three remaining kinds, 'weaving together mortal and immortal'. The Demiurge then divided the impure remains of the world soul to correspond with the number of the stars, and left the gods to form bodies for the souls from borrowed portions of earth, air, fire and water, loans which would have to be repaid. This too is biblical: 'Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return' was the curse on Adam (Gen. 3.19) and Elihu knew that it was not only humans who returned to dust; when the Creator took back his spirit, 'all flesh would perish together and the human would return to dust' (Job 34.14). Philo interpreted Genesis 1.26 as indicating that the Creator delegated certain tasks to his angels: '[the text] plainly shows that he took fellow workers' (*Creation* 75). The Creator handed over to the heavenly powers the creation of human beings: 'he allowed his subject powers to have the fashioning of some things' (*Tongues* 175; also *Flight* 68–70).

Other parallels in the Hebrew Scriptures are equally remarkable. Deutero-Isaiah, at a time when the older system was being superseded, denied that such gods existed: 'Tell us what is to come hereafter that we may know you are gods ... Behold you are nothing ...' (Isa. 41.21–24). When Adam had eaten from the forbidden tree, the LORD, the Second God, addressing we know not whom, said, 'The man has become like one of us ...' (Gen. 3.22). The other gods were known to the Hebrew storytellers. Psalm 82, however, reflecting the older beliefs, describes another scene in the life of the gods and shows that they had been responsible for the affairs of the earth, just as in the *Timaeus*. They had failed in their duties of justice and care, and so they were to be punished. 'You are gods, sons of the Most High all of you. Nevertheless you shall die like a man, and like one of the princes you shall fall' (Ps. 82.6–7, my translation), words echoed in the *Timaeus*. Psalm 58 describes the failures of these gods on earth and includes their victims' prayer that God would destroy them, not unlike the supplications described in *1 Enoch*: 'The souls of men make their suit to the holy ones of heaven saying bring our cause before the Most High' (*1 En.* 9. 3). As in the *Timaeus*, the immortality of the gods could be revoked. The bond of the eternal covenant, which held the creation together, could be destroyed: Isaiah's vision of the collapse of the created order is proof of

this (Isa. 24.4–5), and Jeremiah's assurance that the eternal covenant was secure and would never be revoked shows that this was an issue in the period of the exile (Jer. 31.35–36). The promise to Noah, that the eternal covenant *with all flesh* was secure for all future generations, was itself a product of the crisis of the exile, after the destruction of the first temple (Gen. 9.12–17).

It is clear that two Hebrew texts from the sixth century BCE have much in common with the *Timaeus* and with the teaching of Pythagoras. Ezekiel described a fourfold Living creature who held all life, whom he saw set in a ring within a ring. In his vision, he distinguished between the forms and their appearances. He also described an angel high priest who was the seal of perfection/proportion, and had been the anointed/measuring cherub in the mountain garden of the gods. Deutero-Isaiah (Isa. 40.12–26), issuing a challenge to unknown opponents, described the LORD as the Creator who measured the waters, the heavens and the earth – no mention of creating the mortals of air, water and land – a Creator who had no likeness, who brought out the host of heaven by number and sat above the circle of the earth. The prophet mocked those who made an image that did not move. He also depicted the LORD challenging the gods and declaring that they were nothing (Isa. 41.21–24).

The similarities between Pythagoras, *Timaeus* and texts such as these are remarkable and, given the traditional dates for the Greek philosophers and the Hebrew prophets, cannot be coincidence. There are two possibilities: either the Hebrew Scriptures are to be dated so late that visions and oracles attributed to Ezekiel and poetry attributed to Deutero-Isaiah could have been influenced by Pythagorean philosophy from Italy; or there is truth in the later tradition that Pythagoras spent time in Syria in his youth, during the lifetime of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah, and while there had contact with the people who shared their world view. Clearly there were other influences on the *Timaeus*, there being, for example, no point of contact in the Hebrew tradition for the belief that humans could be reincarnated as animals (*Tim.* 42c). The dominant mythology and theology, however, correspond to that of the 'Older Testament', which has been reconstructed independently of any of the Pythagorean or Platonic texts. It seems that the Pythagorean tradition is another route back to the ancient high priesthood. The similarities between the Essenes and the Pythagoreans, and the natural affinity between Christianity and Platonism, would have been due to their common origin in the first temple.

12

TEXT AND CONTEXT

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation. So that whatsoever is not read therein nor can be proved thereby, it is not required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith or be thought requisite or necessary for salvation. In the Name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. And the other books, as Jerome saith, the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners, but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.

This is Article 6 in the Book of Common Prayer, which has been the defining influence on many biblical scholars, and has often led to the exclusion of other texts even from the field of scholarly research.

Once a community has defined itself by means of a canon of Scripture, there is a new beginning. All the texts in the chosen canon would have had an original context, which presupposed a certain pattern of shared beliefs within which the text was set. *The context was as much a part of the meaning as the words themselves.* Set in a new context, the same text would soon acquire a new meaning. This, together with the complex history of how the familiar Old Testament was formed, has important implications for any reconstruction of Christian origins. We have to ask: Which Scriptures did the first Christians know and use, and how did they understand what they were reading? The evidence suggests that the texts which became the Old Testament of the Western Church were not identical to those used by the earliest Church, and that removing even the texts we have from their cultural context in the so-called Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha has hindered any attempt to reconstruct Christian origins.

Jerome (around 400 CE) made a new translation of the Bible to replace the many older Latin versions. Where there was a Hebrew original to use, he made this the basis of his translation, but the books found only in the Greek Old Testament, which had been the Church's Scripture from the beginning, he considered to be of less importance. Thus there arose a division within the Christian Old Testament, not on the basis of Church custom but on the basis of the Jewish canon of Scripture. Augustine warned that this procedure would divide the Church by implying that the Greek tradition was defective, and would create difficulties for Christians in the West who would not have access to a Hebrew text in cases of dispute.[1] Jerome argued that a translation from the Hebrew text (and the Hebrew canon) was imperative, *if the Jews were to accept it as the basis for discussion and cease their declaration that the Church had false Scriptures.*[2] Jerome used the Hebrew text of his day, even though there had been accusations in the second century that the Jews had altered the text of Scripture after the advent of Christianity.[3]

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Jerome's was a mismatch of both text and canon, even though he believed that he was promoting *Hebraica veritas*, Hebrew truth.

Origen, in the early third century, did not use that description, but he knew that passages important for Christians (i.e. ones used in debate) were not in the current Jewish texts, and that the Jewish Scriptures had passages not in the Christian text. He recognized the importance of these differences 'so that in our debates with the Jews we do not use passages that are not in their texts, and so that we use those passages which are in their texts but not in ours'.[4] It is likely that his Hexapla was compiled as the basis for discussion with Jews, and he did not intend it for use in the Christian communities:

> Should we suppress the texts used by the churches and order the community to reject the sacred books which they use and flatter the Jews and persuade them to give us pure texts in their place, without any forged additions?[5]

Unfortunately 'Origen began with the incorrect assumption of a single Hebrew form of the biblical text';[6] he was not aware of the variety of Hebrew texts which had been superseded by the one he knew. He 'corrected' the Greek Old Testament which the Christians were using in the light of the current Hebrew and of the Greek translations made from that Hebrew, and the result was a disaster for our knowledge of the original Christian Old Testament.[7] Even though *Enoch* had long been treated as Scripture by the Church – Jude and Barnabas had quoted it - Origen also felt that he could not quote it in his exposition of Numbers, on the grounds that the books did not seem to have authority with the Hebrews.[8]

Justin, who lived one hundred years before Origen, wrote an account of his discussions with a learned Jew about the points at issue between Jews and Christians. Perhaps it was fictional, perhaps drawn from life, but one point they debated was the alteration of the Scriptures. 'I certainly do not trust your teachers', said Justin to Trypho, 'when they refuse to admit that the translation of the Scriptures made by the seventy elders at the court of King Ptolemy is a correct one and attempt to make their own translation. You should also know that they have deleted entire passages from the version composed by those elders' (*Trypho* 71). A Christian scholar of the mid-second century, then, claimed that the older Greek version of the Scriptures was being replaced by new translations, and that parts which the Christians were using as messianic texts had been removed. The Jewish scholar denied this. Justin quoted words deleted from *1 Esdras*[9] which cannot be found in any text today, but were known to Lactantius,[10] and words deleted from Jeremiah[11] which, again, cannot be found in any text today but which were quoted by Irenaeus.[12] The words 'from the tree' had been deleted from Psalm 96.10, he said, so that it no longer read 'The LORD reigns from the tree.'[13] Justin also claimed that Jeremiah 11.19 had

recently been removed from the text, but was 'still found in some copies of the Scripture in Jewish synagogues' (*Trypho* 72). It is still in both the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Old Greek, so Justin must have known of more deletions than actually survived. Justin agreed to debate with Trypho on the basis of Scriptures that a mid-second-century Jew would accept.[14]

The story of how the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, *and the story Justin knew* (*To the Greeks* 13), was that Ptolemy II, King of Egypt 285–247 BCE, commissioned for his great library a Greek translation of the Law of Moses. Scrolls and scholars were sent from the high priest in Jerusalem, and when the work was completed, it was read to the Jewish community of the city. They agreed that it was an accurate translation. 'Since this version has been made rightly and reverently and in every respect accurately, it is good that it should remain exactly so and that there should be no revision.' A curse was then pronounced on anyone who altered the text, added to it or took from it (*Letter of Aristeas* 311). Altering the text must have been a matter of controversy even when this was written.[15] Eventually the other Hebrew books were translated into Greek, including at least one (the *Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira*) which was not eventually accepted into the Hebrew canon but was included in the Greek Old Testament. Justin claimed that new translations were being made in his time – these would have been the versions of Theodotion and Aquila to which we shall return – and that significant parts of the LXX, which had been declared a true rendering of the Hebrew, had been removed. Scripture was a battle ground, and at least one community was altering Scripture to strengthen its claims. This alteration of the Scriptures was remembered for a very long time; it appeared centuries later in Muslim scholars' accusations that the Book had been altered.

In the lifetime of Jesus, the LXX had been held in great honour as an inspired text, regarded 'with awe and reverence as the sister of the Hebrew'. The translators, according to Philo, were 'prophets and priests of the mysteries whose sincerity and singleness of thought has enabled them to go hand in hand with the purest of spirits, the spirit of Moses' (*Moses* 2.40). There was an annual celebration at Pharos, where the translation had been made. Schürer famously compared the status of the LXX to that of Luther's Bible for German Protestants.[16] One hundred years later, after the advent of Christianity and the Church's use of the LXX, the Diaspora Jews were using a new Greek version of the Scriptures, and the translation of the LXX was eventually compared to the sin of the golden calf: 'The day of its translation was as grievous for Israel as the day when the golden calf was made, for the Torah could not be adequately translated' (*m. Soferim* 1.7). Aquila made a new Greek translation in the second century CE which was praised by the rabbis: 'Aquila the proselyte translated the Torah for R. Eliezer and R. Joshua

and they congratulated him saying "You are fairer than the children of men" (Ps. 45.2)'.[17] The Christians, however, remembered Aquila rather differently. The *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* is set in Alexandria in the early fifth century, but thought to be a reworking of much earlier material. The Christian Timothy accuses Aquila of corrupting not only the Greek text of Scripture but also the Hebrew: 'If you find that a testimony to Christ has disappeared from the Hebrew or has been concealed in the Greek, it is Aquila's plot.'[18] The date of this text is almost immaterial: a late text would simply show that the dispute was not forgotten. Again, Muslim scholars were later to say that the true text of the Book had been corrupted to remove the name of Muhammed, and that evidence had been concealed.

For several generations, the early Church was beset with the problem of the Old Testament Scriptures: in the second century Marcion had advocated abandoning the whole Hebrew tradition, but the churches condemned this stance and kept the older Scriptures. The question is: which Scriptures? As early as the mid-second century the 'Christian' and the 'Jewish' versions were different. The *Clementine Homilies* record some early Christian responses to the alteration of the Scriptures; the date of these texts is not important. What matters is how the early period was remembered. *Christians had to discern between true and false Scripture in Jewish texts.* Peter explained to Simon Magus how the Jews went astray:

> [Jesus] says, wishing to show them the cause of their error more clearly: On this account do you go astray, not knowing the true things of the Scriptures (Mk 12.24), and for this reason you are also ignorant of the power of God. Therefore every man who wishes to be saved must become, as the Teacher said, a judge of the books written to try us. For he said: 'Become experienced bankers'. Now the need for bankers arises when forgeries are mixed up with the genuine. (*Clem. Hom.* 18.20, with a similar account in 3.50)

It is possible that Jesus had known of changes in the text of Scripture; the Jewish Christian community, for whom this must have been a pressing concern, preserved the saying: 'Not a dot or an iota shall pass away from the Law until all is fulfilled' (Matt. 5.18).

Marcel Simon, writing in 1948 about the material which only appears in Christian texts, concluded: 'We are entitled to reckon such passages not as ones that the Jews suppressed but as Christian interpolations' on the grounds that they could not be found in the original Hebrew.[19] Thirty years later, after impact of the Qumran discoveries, Robert Kraft wrote in M. Simon's Festschrift:

> Our suppositions about what is or is not possible or probable in pre-Christian and non-Christian Jewish circles need to be carefully re-evaluated and reformulated ... For the topic in hand, overtly Christian influences on the transmission of Jewish Scriptures,

most of the older claims can be dismissed because the assumptions on which they were based are no longer convincing ...[20]

An unacknowledged problem at the heart of Western Christian biblical study is that the Church, and especially the Western Church, has as its Scriptures the Jewish canon and text of the Old Testament, when the evidence shows clearly that the earliest Church used very different Scriptures. Let us examine that evidence. This is a complex field and what follows can be no more than a sketch of what is there. There are many unexamined assumptions, and many facts which must be set alongside each other.

After the destruction of the Temple, certain of the Hebrew books came to be accepted as Scripture and others rejected. R. Akiba, a third-generation rabbi teaching some fifty years after the destruction of the temple, said that anyone who read a book excluded from the Scriptures ('the outside books') would have no part in the world to come (*m. Sanhedrin* 10.1). There must have been a Hebrew canon in his time and it must have been very important if such a penalty attached to reading the other books. The decisions about the Hebrew canon are often associated with the scholars who established a new centre of Jewish life and learning at Jamnia, and whilst there is no actual evidence for this, the scholarly expertise required to collect and establish the Hebrew texts is as likely to have been there as anywhere. A thinly veiled account of the process appears in *2 Esdras* (*4 Ezra*), which describes how 'Ezra' was inspired to dictate and define the Scriptures. Although set in the aftermath of the first destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, the text of *2 Esdras* is usually dated after the destruction in 70 CE. 'In the thirtieth year after the destruction of our city' (*2 Esdr.* 3.1) indicates 100 CE. *2 Esdras* (originally the Apocalypse of Salathiel *2 Esdr.* 3–13) was expanded, and then preserved by the Christians. It was probably written by Hebrew Christians reflecting on the outcome of the first revolt against Rome, in which they had been heavily involved, and thus gives the Christian perspective on the formation of the Hebrew canon.[21]

The prophet Ezra, whose genealogy presents him as descended from Aaron (*2 Esdr.* 1.1), heard the Most High speaking to him from a bush. This Ezra was a new Moses, but he was not named Moses. He was told to take five scribes and many writing tablets and then to write what was revealed to him. In forty days he dictated 94 books,[22] and was told by the Most High that only the first 24 were to be made public. The other 70 books were to be given 'to the wise among your people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom and the river of knowledge' (*2 Esdr.* 14.47). The 24 books are assumed to have been the Hebrew canon as it is today,[23] but the books are not named. *The 70 other books were recognized as more important than the Hebrew canon* because they were the source of understanding, wisdom and knowledge. What were

these 70 books? Presumably they were the 'outside books' which were forbidden to anyone who identified as a Jew. If, as seems likely, they were the pre-Christian texts that were only preserved by the Christians, e.g. the earlier strata of the *Ascension of Isaiah*, the texts known as *1 (& 2) Enoch* – the texts now classified as the *Pseudepigrapha* – there must have been something of great importance in these texts. It is entirely possible that Justin had first-hand knowledge of these events. He was born around the end of the first century CE in Flavia Neapolis (near ancient Shechem) which is about forty miles from Jamnia. The Christians in Palestine must have known what was being done to the Scriptures – hence the 'Ezra' story – and Justin was the first to raise this issue of altering texts. *The Christian telling of this story showed that they did not accept the Ezra canon as exclusive.*

The definition of the canon must have been a major factor in the distinction between Judaism and Christianity, so what are the consequences of the Western Church having accepted the Hebrew canon and, in effect, excluding the other books? One has to ask what understanding, wisdom and knowledge for the wise was lost because of this choice of canon? The other books would not have been simply 'the apocrypha', the additional books which were to become part of the Greek canon, although some may have been among them.[24] In later Jewish writings there is no reference to *1 Enoch* for several centuries, *even though it was cited as Scripture by the early Church*, and the quantity of material found at Qumran ranks *Enoch* with the major texts of the Hebrew Scriptures: 20 copies of *1 Enoch*, compared with 21 of Isaiah, 20 of Genesis, but only 6 of Jeremiah. There is good reason to believe that this 'Ezra' not only determined the canon but also gave the Hebrew text the form which superseded all earlier texts and became the MT. The differences between the texts were only a tiny proportion of the whole, but they were not simply matters of style and spelling. Some indicate a major dispute being conducted through the text of Scripture, and the Church eventually found itself with the 'other' text. This dispute was also remembered, as we shall see, and appeared in later accusations that the Scriptures had been rewritten by Ezra. Thus Porphyry, the Neoplatonist from Syria, wrote at the end of the third century CE that nothing of the original Mosaic Torah remained; it had been burned with the temple. The Mosaic writings had actually been composed by Ezra and his disciples.[25] He must have known the story in *2 Esdras*.

Josephus reveals that the Jews defending Jerusalem against the Romans had oracles in what he calls 'their' Scriptures, in other words, works not in the Hebrew canon which Josephus would have acknowledged as Scripture. 'The Jews had it recorded in their oracles that the city and the sanctuary would be taken when the temple should become four-square ... [there was also] an ambiguous oracle, likewise

found in their sacred Scriptures, to the effect that at that time one from their country would become ruler of the world' (*War* 6.311–13). This sequence of two oracles appears in the Book of Revelation: first John was told to measure the temple but not the outer court, and then the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and the voices in heaven cried, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our LORD and of his Christ' (Rev. 11.15). The Book of Revelation seems to be the fulfilment of a programme of prophecies not in the present Hebrew canon but known to Jesus. Josephus himself, when he decided to change sides and fight for the Romans, went to Vespasian and his son Titus and declared that he was a prophet who had to reveal that Vespasian was the one destined to rule the world (*War* 3.400–02).[26]

Josephus also reports one of his own speeches to the people in the besieged city: 'Who does not know the records of the ancient prophets, and the oracle which threatens this poor city and is even now coming true? For they foretold that it would be taken whensoever one should begin to slaughter his own countrymen . . .' (*War* 6.110). Jesus cited this as one of the signs that would precede the fall of the temple: 'Brother will deliver up brother to death and the father his child, and children will rise against their parents and have them put to death' (Mk 13.12–13). Josephus described this saying of Jesus as an ancient oracle, and we must assume he was correct. What book was Jesus quoting? Not one we have in the Hebrew canon today, but presumably one recognized as Scripture by his followers.

Perhaps this is how we should explain the quotations in early Christian writings from Scriptures which cannot be identified. The fact that the lines are quoted at all shows that they were significant texts, and yet their sources are unknown. Is it more likely that writings preserved by the Church contained fictitious references, or that, given the evidence from other sources which we shall examine in a moment, certain key texts have simply disappeared from the form of the Hebrew Scriptures which became the Western Old Testament? The *Letter of Barnabas*, for example, quotes an otherwise unknown prophecy about the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement: 'Let them eat of the goat which is offered for their sins at the fast, and let all the priests, but nobody else, eat of it inward parts unwashed and with vinegar' (*Barn.* 7). Something similar occurs in the Mishnah, which says that the 'Babylonians' used to eat the sin offering of the Day of Atonement raw (*m. Menaḥoth* 11.7). This verse is very important for understanding the original significance of the Eucharist. Eating unwashed parts of a sacrifice means that blood was consumed in a temple ritual. 'Drinking blood', so often cited as an example of the extreme 'unJewishness' of eucharistic symbolism, *was* temple practice for the great Atonement sacrifice of Yom Kippur. One can understand why that verse might have had to disappear, even though there is a disparaging reference to it in the Mishnah. Barnabas linked this

sacred meal of entrails and vinegar to Jesus' drinking vinegar just before he died, which may be why the evangelists included that detail (Matt. 27.48; Mk 15.36; John 19.29). Barnabas also added what seems to be a saying of Jesus: 'When I am about to offer my body for the sins of this new people of mine, you will be giving me gall and vinegar to drink.'

There are other 'Scriptures' quoted by Barnabas which are not known elsewhere: 'A heart that glorifies its maker is a sweet savour to the LORD, (*Barn.* 2, introduced by 'He tells us'); 'I am now making the last things even as I made the first' (*Barn.* 6, introduced by 'the LORD says'); 'The land of Jacob was extolled above all the earth' (*Barn.* 11, 'another of the prophets'); 'If my sons keep the Sabbath I will show mercy upon them' (*Barn.* 15, 'When God spoke to Moses we read ... and in another place we read'); 'When the week draws to its close, then a temple of God will be built gloriously in the Name of the LORD, (*Barn.* 16, 'He himself tells us'). Barnabas 16 also quoted *1 Enoch* as Scripture: 'for Scripture says ...' is followed by *1 Enoch* 89.56: 'It will come to pass in the last days that the LORD will deliver up to destruction the sheep of the pasture with their sheepfold and their watchtower.' The Letter of Jude also quoted Enoch as prophet (Jude 14).

The evidence that the early Church quoted from Scriptures no longer known to us could indicate either that they used different versions of books in the current Hebrew canon, as suggested by their use of the Qumran version of Isaiah,[27] or that they had holy books other than those which eventually became the Hebrew canon, as suggested by their use of *1 Enoch*. Both these possibilities create huge problems for understanding the context of Christian origins, but the case of the Christians is not unique. The great Temple Scroll (11QTemple) found at Qumran was clearly a scriptural text. The Damascus Document describes a group who separated themselves from the pollution of the second temple and devoted themselves to the Law. They quoted the *Book of Jubilees* as Scripture (CD XVI), and their leader had to know the Law and the *Book of Hagu* (CD XIV, if that is how the word is to be read). This important book is lost; we have no *Book of Hagu*. Something similar could have happened to books that the earliest Churches regarded as Scripture. The collection of writings now known as *1 Enoch* was lost to the West until rediscovered in Ethiopia 1770, and parts of a Greek copy were found in Egypt in 1886. It had, however, been available in Constantinople at the end of the eighth century, and was used by George Syncellus the Byzantine historian. The texts known as *2 Enoch* must have travelled north with the Christian missionaries into Russia, as they survive in Old Slavonic. These must have been among the 70 books for the wise which are the lost context of Christian origins. *Muslim tradition was later to describe how parts of the Book had been abandoned and hidden.*

One has only to look at the variety of text forms found at Qumran to

see that the idea of one fixed Hebrew text is untenable. Some of the differences from the MT are minor – a fuller spelling, a word here and there, the tense of a verb or the use of a synonym. These would be sufficient in themselves to show that the text was in no way fixed. *Some of the differences, however, are very important, and they should be described as differences rather than variants.* In Genesis 22.14, for example, the MT has the LORD, the LXX has the equivalent of the LORD, but 4QGenesis-Exodus has 'God, *'elohim*, showing that scribes used either name. This is disastrous for the Documentary hypothesis of the formation of the Pentateuch, if the J and E forms of the name were still interchangeable at the end of the second temple period. The fact that the names of God could be changed in the Hebrew text should be considered in the light of Jerome's remark about the translators of the LXX, that they had *to suppress certain prophecies of the Messiah lest they give the King of Egypt the impression that the Jews worshipped a second God.*[28] This is confirmed by Jewish sources: certain passages in Genesis, for example, had the plural reference to God changed to the singular. 'Thirteen matters did sages change for Talmi [Ptolemy] the king. They wrote as follows for him: "Let me make man in an image, in a likeness (Gen. 1.27) ... Come, I shall go down (Gen. 11.7) ..." '[29] This is no longer in the text of the LXX.

In Deuteronomy 32 the Qumran texts are significantly different from the MT. The Qumran text of Deuteronomy 32.8 says that the Most High divided out the nations of the earth according to 'the number of the sons of God' similar to the LXX which has 'angels of God'.[30] Israel was given to the LORD, one of the sons of God, implying that the LORD worshipped by the Hebrews was not the Father but the Son. The phrase 'sons of God' is not in the MT, and thus the MT lacks a key text for demonstrating the early Christian belief that Jesus was the LORD, the God of Israel, the Son of God Most High. This absence of the sons of God could be coincidence but for the fact that the phrase is also missing from the MT of Deuteronomy 32.43. The Qumran and LXX of this verse are both longer than the MT,[31] having 'his sons' where the MT has 'his servants'. The line used by the Church as a messianic proof text, 'Let all God's angels worship him' (Heb. 1.6), represented in the Qumran text and in the LXX, is also *absent from the MT*. Thus the early Christian belief that the LORD was coming to bring the Day of Judgement disappeared from the MT. In the light of the accusations made by Justin, that the text of the Scriptures had been altered to remove Messianic proof texts, these cannot have been random variations. References to 'sons of God' of whom the LORD was one, and messianic proof texts, did disappear from the Hebrew which became the MT, but this nevertheless had to be the basis for discussion with Jews and eventually became the standard by which the Christian text of the Old Testament was 'corrected'.

The distinctive readings of the great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran raise some important questions about the state of that text in the period of Christian origins, in other words, the form of Isaiah which could have been known to Jesus and the early Church. There can be little doubt that the Qumran form of Isaiah is the one presupposed by the New Testament. A glance will show that the evangelists associated Jesus more closely with this prophet than with any other, and so when the Qumran Isaiah differs from the MT in significant passages *this is unlikely to have been coincidence*. First, there is a different form of the Immanuel prophecy, 'the Virgin shall conceive and bear a son ...' (Isa. 7.14). Photographs of the Scroll[32] show an *'aleph* where the MT has an *'ayin* in Isaiah 7.11,[33] and so the text reads: 'Ask a sign from the Mother of the LORD your God.' This could be a careless scribe, a spelling mistake, but this is the only known example of the pre-Christian Hebrew of Isaiah 7.11, and it mentions the mother of the LORD. Those reading it might not have known it was a spelling mistake, if that it what it was.

There are also places in the Fourth Servant Song, another key text for the early Church, where the later MT differs from the Isaiah Scroll. The Targum understood this passage as a description of the Messiah whose appearance was not that of an ordinary man. 'My Servant the Messiah shall prosper' (*Tg. Isa.* 52.13), 'his *countenance* shall be a holy *countenance*' (*zyw*, literally splendour or brightness, *Tg. Isa.* 53.2), neither of which is obviously in the MT. The early Church read the whole passage as a prophecy of the life and death of Jesus. Apart from the Targum, there was no Jewish text which described a suffering Messiah, and so it became a commonplace to suggest that the messianic reading of the Fourth Servant Song had been a Christian innovation to explain a Messiah who suffered. 1QIsaiah[a] 52.14 however, has one more letter that the MT in the word usually rendered disfigured or marred. That extra letter could change the word into 'I have anointed', *maśaḥti* or 'my anointed one', *moŝḥati* (cf. Num. 18.8),[34] which would give a meaning: '... I have anointed him more than a man in his appearance ... and he will sprinkle many nations ...'.[35] It would then be a reference to the exalted and transfigured Servant, the anointed Servant of Psalm 89 who was raised up and triumphed over his enemies, and it would explain the Targum. In Isaiah 53.11 the MT again differs from the Qumran text,[36] having the word 'light' and giving the sense 'After the struggle of his soul he shall see the light ...'. The Qumran Isaiah describes an anointed one who has been transfigured, suffers, and then sees the light, presumably of the glory of God. Compare this with Luke's account of the walk to Emmaus. The risen LORD joins the disciples and rebukes them for not believing the prophecies: 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the anointed one should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' (Lk. 24.25–26). There is nothing in the MT of the prophets which

describes a suffering Messiah who sees the glory of God, so *the story in Luke presupposes the Qumran version of Isaiah.* This reference to the prophecy of a suffering Messiah was not removed from Luke's Gospel, or smoothed over,[37] and so it cannot have caused the difficulties to the earliest Church which it causes to those using an Old Testament based on the MT. Jerome noted that there were many quotations in the New Testament which were not in the Old Testament of his time, but gave this as a reason for preferring the Hebrew text.[38] By the middle of the second century CE, however, Justin had been accusing the Jews of removing messianic texts from the Scriptures, and, *given the very small amount of the biblical material found at Qumran, it is interesting how many differences from the MT support to Justin's claim even though they are not examples he used.*

The process by which the MT became the only text of the Hebrew Scriptures is sometimes described as 'stabilizing' the Hebrew text, but factors other than scholarly can shape judgements in this area, e.g. 'MT reflects a text like all other texts and has no specific characteristics – the single typological feature that could be attributed to it is the slightly corrupt nature of the Book of Samuel.'[39] Scholars seem not to consider the major implications for Christian origins of the Qumran readings in, say, Deuteronomy and Isaiah, which are not in the MT.[40] The original assumption had been that the Qumran evidence represented sectarian or vulgar versions of the Hebrew text, but scribes updating texts and producing uniformity must mean that some things were being altered, some things were being removed. Misleading comparisons have been offered. It is true that texts of the Masoretic type predominate after 100 CE. It is also true that translations made after that time – Aquila and Symmachus – the Rabbinic literature and several Targums, and the fifth column of the Hexapla were all based on the MT,[41] but this should raise the question of why, at this precise period, only one Hebrew text was in use after the earlier pluriformity. It could well have been the influence of 'Ezra', imposing the MT. There is a glimpse of this situation in the Talmud; the books of the *minim*, even if they contained verses of Scripture, were to be destroyed, and any scroll copied by the *minim* had to be destroyed, even if it contained the Name.[42] There is an enigmatic reference in the Scroll of Fasting, an Aramaic document from second century CE, which lists the days when fasting was forbidden. They commemorate the great events of the second temple period such as the triumphs of the Maccabees, the destruction of the Samaritan temple, the rescinding of Caligula's order to have his statue in the temple, the departure of the Romans from Jerusalem. On the third of Tishri 'the memory of the documents was removed' (or 'the memory was removed from the documents'). What might this have been? Even though there are no details, the text shows that the destruction of some records was being celebrated at the end of the second temple period.[43] Tov admits

that the situation after 100 CE 'does not imply superiority of that [MT] textual tradition. The communities which fostered other textual traditions either ceased to exist (the Qumran covenanters) or disassociated themselves from Judaism (the Samaritans and Christians).'[44] The period of uniformity and stability in Hebrew texts after 100 CE was due to 'political and socio-religious events and developments ... those who fostered [the MT] probably constituted the only group which survived the destruction of the second temple'.[45] This is clearly not the case. The Christians survived the destruction of the second temple. They believed themselves to be the heirs to its traditions, and they had another tradition of Scripture which was obliterated in the interests of finding common ground for debate. *Eventually, the Christians found themselves with that very text which had originally defined the Jewish position.*[46]

After Jerusalem had fallen in 70 CE, Josephus asked Titus if he could have the holy books (*Life* 75), and he then went straight to the temple presumably because the books were there. He also records that the greatest prize of war displayed together with the temple vessels in the victory procession in Rome was a book of the Jewish Law (*War* 7.152). The temple vessels were placed in the Temple of Peace, but the Book of the Law and the curtains of the holy place were kept in Caesar's palace (*War* 7.162). The Emperor Severus (222–35), a contemporary of Origen, donated this scroll to a new synagogue, and later writings which quote from this scroll show that it differed in many ways from the MT.[47] When Origen made his Hexapla in Palestine (about 240 CE), he used a variety of Greek texts but only one Hebrew, which Eusebius was later to describe as 'the original documents circulating among the Jews'.[48] It is a great irony that just as the older temple text was being returned to the Jews by the Emperor Severus, Origen began his quest for the original using the Hebrew text in current use, i.e. the later version. Earlier in the third century, a scroll of the Psalms had been found in a jar at Jericho, and Origen used this in his Hexapla alongside the other versions, i.e. he recognized that it was a different text.[49] When Jerome, also working in Palestine at the end of the fourth century, opted for the Hebrew text as the basis for his Latin translation, he, too, must have used the later text.

Origen made his 'improved' text of the Greek Old Testament on the basis of the MT and the Greek translations made by Jews after the Christians had adopted the LXX – Theodotion, Aquila and Symmachus. Theodotion and his successor Aquila aimed to produce a Greek text closer to the Hebrew of their time, i.e. closer to that Hebrew text which became the MT. In other words, Origen was using various versions of the post-100 CE Hebrew to 'improve' the older Greek. Jewish scholars describe the process differently: 'It seems that the LXX had fallen from favour [with the Jews], and a new translation

was sought which was more faithful to the original (or, in other words, which better conveyed the rabbinic exegesis of the Bible). *Several attempts were made to bring the LXX up to date,* but it was Aquila's version which won acceptance in Rabbinic circles . . .'[50] Up to date? What had changed? It must have been the Hebrew text on which the translation was to be based. Justin's own example for Trypho will illustrate a characteristic of the new translations. '"Behold the Virgin shall conceive" but you say it ought to be read "Behold the young woman shall conceive." '[51] The Hebrew word in dispute is *'almah*, which does usually mean a young woman. But the Hebrew of Isaiah 7.14 has *the 'almah*, implying a special female figure, one whom the original translators of the LXX could well have remembered as The Virgin, *parthenos*.[52] This is how the word was understood in Matthew's Gospel, and so presumably by the early Christian community. The post-Christian translators of the Hebrew text, even though there was no difference in the underlying Hebrew at this point, were unanimous that the word had to be *neanis*, young woman. Aquila also avoided 'Christos' as the translation of Anointed or Messiah; he made a new word *eleimmenos*, even though his predecessor Theodotion had used the traditional *christos*. In Aquila's situation, this would not have been acceptable.[53]

A letter to Sergius Metropolitan of Elam, dated 800 CE, from Timotheus I, Patriarch of Seleucia, also testifies to the existence of earlier and different biblical texts. Some Jews being instructed as catechumens had told him about some 'books of the Old Testament and others in the Hebrew script' discovered in a cave.

> Since there was a scholar well read in literature among them, I asked him about many passages quoted in our New Testament as coming from the Old Testament but found nowhere in it, neither in copies among the Jews nor in those among the Christians. He said they are there and can be found in the books discovered there . . . If these passages occur in the books named, these are clearly more trustworthy than those among the Hebrews and those among us.[54]

The implication is that the books from the cave had a Hebrew text which antedated the formation of the MT and the corruption of the Old Greek. The Patriarch Timothy tried without success to make further enquiries, for example about 'He shall be called a Nazarene' (Matt. 2.23). He also wrote about these discoveries to Gabriel, a Christian physician in the court of Caliph Harun-alRashid in Baghdad. This must have confirmed Muslim belief that the Book had been altered.

Since the original Ezra had led the 'men of the great synagogue', and represented the traditions which came back from Babylon, the story of Ezra dictating the Scriptures may be describing how *the Babylonian tradition eventually determined the Hebrew canon*.[55] This is significant for

Christian origins, as their roots lay elsewhere.[56] The tradition described itself thus: 'Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets committed it to the men of the Great Synagogue' (*m. Aboth* 1.1). *This tradition bypasses the temple and the priesthood* as described in the books of Moses, even though the genealogy of Ezra presents him as descended from Aaron. Josephus said that this group of people who returned from Babylon were known as 'the Jews' (*Ant.* 11.173) whereas the Samaritans claimed to be 'Hebrews ... but not Jews' (*Ant.* 11.344). One wonders who else was claiming to be a Hebrew but not a Jew. In the New Testament there is a Letter to the Hebrews, but the Jews are depicted, especially in the Fourth Gospel, as hostile to the disciples of Jesus. From the beginning, the Church identified itself as the heir to the temple, with Jesus as the great high priest, and his teachings described as the secrets of the holy of holies. Thus Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, early in the second century, wrote: 'To Jesus alone as our High Priest were the secret things of God committed' (*Philadelphians* 9) and Clement of Alexandria, writing towards the end of the second century, used similar imagery: 'We enter in through the tradition of the LORD, by drawing aside the curtain' (*Misc.* 7.17), in other words, by entering the high priestly domain of the holy of holies beyond the veil of the temple. Ignatius, at the time the Hebrew text was being stabilized, and Clement, both contrasted their teaching with the false teaching of others, and both claimed that their teaching was the high priestly tradition. The 'others' are not named. Note too that the one was from Antioch and the other from Alexandria, and so this claim antedated the two distinct schools of biblical interpretation later associated with Antioch and Alexandria.

The tradition in the Mishnah, that there had been an oral tradition of interpretation passed from Moses through Joshua and others but not through the priests was thus recorded *at the same time as the Christians were claiming to have the true high priestly tradition, also unwritten, passed to them from the great high priest.*[57] Hostility to this oral tradition persisted for centuries. In the Church, it took the form of hostility to *deuterosis*, the oral law. As early as the *Letter of Barnabas* it was argued that the Jews had lost their claim to the covenant by making the golden calf; Moses had smashed the tablets, and everything that followed was by way of a punishment (*Barn.* 4 and 14). This argument finds its fullest expression in the *Didascalia*, where the second lawcode, given after the apostacy of golden calf, was 'heavy chains of burdens' from which the Christian had been set free (*Didasc.* 6). It has been observed that *deuterosis* is the exact Greek equivalent of Mishnah, and so everything associated with the Ezra tradition was thus condemned. By the fourth century CE, Christian writers were applying this term to Rabbinic exegesis, and the scholars themselves were known as *deuterotai* (e.g. Jerome, *On Matt.*

22.23; *On Isa.* 10.1).[58] The *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* went so far as to exclude Deuteronomy from the canon because it was not dictated by God and so was not kept in the ark of the covenant.[59] Muslim tradition was similar. The people at Sinai heard the true words and disobeyed, and they had to drink into their hearts the corruption of the golden calf (Exod. 32.20 and Sura 2.92–93).

Thus it was the non-priestly Jewish tradition which defined the Hebrew canon and its text, the canon and text adopted by Jerome as the basis for his Old Testament, on the grounds that this was the version that Jews would accept as the basis for discussion. The non-priestly Jewish tradition also excluded those books such as *1 Enoch* which were the repositories of the older priestly traditions. Thus both the text and the context of the priesthood disappeared. They seem to have survived in the life and liturgy of the Church, but largely unrecognized because there is so little by which to identify what does remain.

The early Church read *1 Enoch* as Scripture; Clement and Origen both knew and quoted from it. *1 Enoch*, however, has a very different estimate of the people who returned from Babylon, the Ezra tradition. Far from restoring the true temple and the true Scriptures, they were a generation of impure apostates who had forsaken wisdom and lost their vision (*1 En.* 89.73; 93.8–9). Lying words had been written, perverting the eternal covenant; sinners had altered the truth as they made copies, they had made great fabrications and written books in their own name (*1 En.* 98.14–99.2;104.10–11).[60] If the heirs of Ezra defined the canon and excluded certain books which the Christians continued to read and to preserve, the adoption of the Ezra canon and the Ezra text as the basis for the Christian Old Testament since the time of Jerome *must have distorted the tradition and created a considerable impediment to the understanding of Christian origins.*

In addition, it is necessary to take into consideration the historical process by which the Hebrew Scriptures, as we know them, came into being. The Deuteronomistic histories, which have so often been read as histories, are remarkable for the way they systematically condemn almost everything in the nation's history. The kings are judged by the criteria of Deuteronomic orthodoxy, and then condemned and dismissed one by one. Whoever wrote these texts was clearly setting out to discredit what had existed in Jerusalem in the time of the first temple: it was the voice of a new regime. Their description of the temple does not include items such as the veil and the chariot throne, which appear in the Chronicler's account and were important elements in priestly theology. Other sources are mentioned, but they have not survived.[61] Isaiah is the only one of the latter prophets who appears in this account.

Nor has the debate about the Pentateuch reached any conclusion, except that the form with which we are familiar was a second temple

composition, and thus produced by the 'impure apostates' of the Enoch tradition. The stories of rivalry among the priestly families are thinly veiled second temple history, the tabernacle and its Aaronite priests are a glimpse of the second temple cult. The stories of Abraham were selected to substantiate the claims of Isaac, and Mount Moriah became identified as the site of the Jerusalem temple. Nobody knows what do with the episode of Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek, who only makes brief appearances in Genesis and Psalm 110, but was a key messianic figure at Qumran and in the New Testament. The early Church seems to have known another version of Genesis 22, that Isaac *was* sacrificed and resurrected.[62] The Deuteronomic version of the calendar does not mention the Day of Atonement, only Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles (Deut. 16). The episode of the golden calf denies that any person can make atonement for another (Exod. 32.30–33). The secret things are forbidden (Deut. 29.29), and the Law is to replace Wisdom (Deut. 4.6). We should ask whom the Pentateuch defined and whom it excluded. The voices in Isaiah 63.16 had been excluded from the second temple by those who had compiled the Pentateuch, and they cursed the name of their oppressors, claiming that the true servants of God would have a new name (Isa. 65.15).

Texts outside the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic histories have become unreadable in the MT. The text of Psalm 110, the Melchizedek psalm, which the early Church quoted more than any other, is corrupt, and the vital verse is unreadable in the MT. The LXX enables us to see that it described the birth of the divine son who became the Melchizedek priest (Ps. 109.3). The MT of Proverbs 30.1–4 is unreadable, but it seems to describe someone ascending to heaven to learn Wisdom. And what vision was David granted? The MT of 1 Chronicles 17.17 is unreadable, but seems to describe a vision of the man ascending or perhaps being offered. Why are these lines in the MT unreadable? The distribution of unreadable Hebrew texts is not random; *they are texts which bear upon the Christian tradition.* Add to these examples the variants in Isaiah about the Messiah, the variants in Deuteronomy 32 about the sons of God, and there is a case to answer. These are instances where traces remain. We can never know what has completely disappeared.

If we read the Hebrew Scriptures in the way that the first Christians read them, we should understand that Yahweh was the son of God Most High (El Elyon), the Second Person (to use an anachronism), and that Yahweh was incarnate in Jesus.[63] Thus Gabriel announced to Mary, 'He shall be called Son of God Most High' (Luke 1.32). We should know why Paul could proclaim one God, the Father, and one LORD, Jesus the Messiah (1 Cor. 8.6). We should know why two early texts of the New Testament[64] came to describe Jesus as the one who brought Israel out of Egypt (Jude 5). We should know why the Fourth

evangelist believed that Isaiah's vision of the LORD had been a vision of Jesus (John 12.41). We should know why Justin regarded the Old Testament theophanies as pre-incarnation appearances of Jesus, why Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Novatian read the Old Testament in the same way,[65] and why Constantine's mother erected a Christian church at Mamre, the place where the LORD appeared to Abraham. We should also understand why ikons of Christ have in the halo *ho on*, the Greek form of Yahweh.

Much scholarly labour has been expended on how the distinction between Yahweh and *'elohim* might have been a clue to the original strands of the Pentateuch. Far less has been done on the relationship between Yahweh and El Elyon, despite the invitation to investigate the 'sons of Elyon' implicit in Qumran versions of Deuteronomy. Elyon and Yahweh had been Father and Son; Luke knew this when he wrote his account of the Annunciation. Later hands smoothed over evidence in the Hebrew text: the God of Melchizedek, according to the other ancient versions of Genesis 14.22, was El Elyon, but only in the MT do we find the name as Yahweh El Elyon. *This change must have been made after the advent of Christianity in order to obscure the name of Melchizedek's God.* Other changes to the names of God were made much earlier, in the wake of the Deuteronomists and their creed of One God One Temple. Some years ago I asked the question: 'What period of Israel's thought does the Pentateuch represent, with its many names and manifestations of God all gathered into one tradition?'[66] There are clear instances in the Psalter and in the central chapters of Isaiah where the title of Melchizedek's El Elyon has been transferred to Yahweh. 'Creator [*qoneh*, literally begetter] of heaven and earth' became 'Yahweh, *Maker* of heaven and earth'. 'The idea of a procreator God with sons seems to have fallen out of favour with those who equated Yahweh and El.'[67] The Christian proclamation of Jesus as Son of God could well have provoked further tidying up of the Hebrew text, such as those alterations in Genesis 14.22 and Deuteronomy 32.

If we read the Hebrew Scriptures in the way that readers of *1 Enoch* read them, then we should understand that Josiah's changes to the temple at the end of the seventh century BCE were not a reform but the destruction of the ancient cult. We should recognize that Wisdom had been driven from the temple at that time. We should be hoping for the destruction of the temple and the city built by 'Ezra' and his apostates, as did the Christians of the Book of Revelation. We should remember a time when Moses had not been part of the history of Israel. We should read Proverbs differently and see Wisdom not as a late personification but as an ancient memory, the Queen of Heaven who had been rejected on earth and had returned to take her place among the angels. Had we the other texts and another canon we should know that Wisdom had been excluded from the second temple and from its texts. We should

recognize that Wisdom was again excluded when the Hebrew canon was formed at the end of the first century CE, *because the Christians had proclaimed the fall of the harlot Jerusalem and the return of the banished Wisdom, and they proclaimed the advent of her son the Messiah.* We should recognize her as the Mother of the LORD, and find this confirmed in Isaiah's prophecy. And we should understand why the Eastern Church dedicated her greatest churches to the Holy Wisdom.

There is evidence to suggest that the refugees from Josiah's changes to the temple settled not only in Egypt but also in Arabia, among the sons of Ishmael.[68] This tradition was known when the Jerusalem Talmud was compiled in the fourth century CE, i.e. when Christians and Jews were still arguing over the text and canon of the Scriptures. Since 'Ezra' and his heirs were associated with the new ('apostate') ways in Jerusalem and with the rejection of Wisdom, it would not be surprising if hostility to his tradition and Scriptures survived among 'the sons of Ishmael'. The faithful ones described in Isaiah warned the returned exiles in Jerusalem that their name would become a curse, and that the faithful servants would have a new name (Isa. 65.15). Even though the accusations have been made relevant to the new situation after the advent of Muhammed, the pattern of accusation is recognizable in Muslim texts. The enigmatic and allusive nature of the text of the Qur'an makes certainty impossible, but there are striking passages, not least the frequent references to the falsification of the text (*tahrif*), and to 'the Book and Wisdom' (3.81; 4.113; 5.110) which had been given, together with a great kingdom, to the people of Abraham (4.54). They were also given to Jesus (3.48; 3.79). This could be an allusion to the roots of Christianity being in the older faith of Abraham and 'Wisdom', and in the cult of the first temple.[69] It is quite clear that the earliest Christians had Scriptures other than those in the present Old Testament, and the story of Ezra in *2 Esdras* 14 shows that Wisdom had been lost along with the other secret books.

In the Qur'an a group are accused of claiming as Scripture passages they have written themselves (2.79), of altering the meaning of the text (2.75) and of accepting only part of the text (2.85). One passage describes how a group of the people of the Book threw away the Book of Allah and chose instead to follow evil teaching from Babylon (2.101–02). This could easily be the words of the 'Enoch' tradition which rejected the second temple and the teaching brought back from Babylon. The people of the Book look for allegorical and hidden meanings (3.7), and those who have only a part of the book 'traffic in error' to lead people astray (4.44). The Scriptures have been sold (5.44). The Jews are accused of twisting the words of Scripture (4.46).[70] Given that 'Jew' was the name given to those who returned from Babylon, but not to all the heirs of ancient Israel, this could be a pre-Muslim complaint emerging in the new situation. Parts of Moses' Book had

been concealed (6.91) and parts had been changed (7.162), so that the covenant of the Book has been taken from them (7.169). This had been a Christian accusation as early as the *Letter of Barnabas*.

Early discussions between Christians and Muslims, whether actual or fictional, show that the state of the Scriptures was an important issue. By the eighth century CE, however, Jews and Christians accepted the same (Jewish) text, and so their debates were about the interpretation of a common text. Between Christian and Muslim, however, there was the old debate about the authenticity of the text. Caliph Umar II wrote to the Byzantine Emperor Leo III (717–40):

> You declare that the Code was more than once written by the Children of Israel who read it and understood it, and that it was many times lost, so that for a long time there was nothing remaining of it remaining among them, till at a later period some men recomposed it out of their own heads ... Why is it that in the Mosaic Code one finds no clear indication of either heaven or hell, or of the resurrection or judgement?[71]

Leo acknowledged that the Scriptures had been written by Ezra, but declared that the books were exactly like those that had been lost, due to 'the marvellous work of God'. Umar's attitude could be dismissed as petulance ('our beliefs are not there so it must be wrong'), but the 'lost' Scriptures rejected by the Ezra tradition do in fact deal with heaven and hell, resurrection and judgement. These are major themes of the Enochic, priestly tradition, and enquiry about them was specifically prohibited for Jews.[72] The present, final form of the Hebrew Scriptures has emphasized later tradition and suppressed the Enochic.[73] In 781 CE, when the Caliph Mahdi and the Patriarch Timothy debated the two faiths, the Caliph accused Christians of removing from Scripture testimonies to Muhammed. 'If you had not corrupted the Scriptures, you would have found in them Muhammed as well as the other prophets.' The Patriarch by this period could use *the fact of Jews and Christians having identical Scriptures as proof that they had not been corrupted*! 'If the Christians and Jews are enemies, and if there is no possibility that enemies should have a common agreement on the line that divides them, it is therefore impossible for the Christians and the Jews to agree on the corruption of the Books.'[74]

That the Muslim arguments against the Book had their ultimate roots in the disputes between those who became 'Rabbinic' Jews and others whom we glimpse at Qumran and among the early Christians, was implied some fifty years ago in an early reaction to the Qumran discoveries. Chaim Rabin, a Jewish scholar, argued that the remnants of the Qumran group, whom he regarded as a sect, had taken refuge in Arabia, and that their descendants had been among the early followers of Muhammed. He cited numerous similarities both in style and substance between the Qumran texts and the Qur'an, including the interest in heaven, hell and the judgement. Earlier Old Testament

scholars had denied links between Islam and the earlier faiths, he suggested, because they had lacked the Qumran evidence. He cited Wellhausen whose 'chief objection to a Jewish origin of Islam was the intense pre-occupation with the end of the world, which is absent in Talmudic Judaism and also from seventh-century Christianity.' ... 'We can now understand why so many of Muhammed's attacks against the Jews of Medina can be paralleled from the New Testament; both the NT and he drew *on the same sectarian arsenal.*' 'It may well be that the sectarian writings account for the scrolls of Abraham and Moses from which Muhammed quotes in the early Sura 53.36–54 ...' It is highly probable, he concluded, that Muhammed had contacts with *'heretical, anti Rabbinic Jews*, and a number of ... details suggest the Qumran sect'.[75] Since, as I have suggested, these 'anti-Rabbinic' Jews were those whose scriptural tradition had been superseded first by the work of 'Ezra' and then in the interests of Christian debate with Jews, one can understand the basis of the Muslim arguments.

The tenth-century CE Karaite al Qirqisani wrote an account of the Jewish sects and their history. He accused the Rabbinic Jews of teaching that Ezra gave a new Torah.

> They say that the Torah which is in the hands of the people is not the one brought down by Moses, but is a new one composed by Ezra, for, according to them, the one brought down by Moses perished and was lost and forgotten. This is the abrogation of the entire faith. If the Moslems only knew about this assertion of theirs, they would not need any other thing to reproach us with, and use as an argument against us.[76]

He went on to list the many ways in which the Rabbinic Jews differed from all other Jewish groups, and concluded that they surpassed even the Christians in nonsense and lying.[77] Ezra again. The earlier Muslim writers do not associate Ezra with the falsification of Scripture,[78] but by the eleventh century CE, in the work of Ibn Ḥazm, Ezra was being accused of falsifying the text.[79]

If we could define precisely who and what was indicated by the name Ezra, we should be a good deal nearer to understanding the intricacies of this quest for the 'lost Book', and what was excluded when the Hebrew canon was fixed. His earliest appearance outside the canon is in the additions to the *Apocalypse of Salathiel*, the earlier title for *2 Esdras* 3–13. Salathiel was identified as Ezra (*2 Esdr.* 3.1), but Ezra does not appear again by name until *2 Esdras* 14.1, the account of the renewing of Scripture. The canonical genealogies are also suspect: in the list of the high priests, Azariah was father of Seraiah, and Seraiah of Jehozadak the high priest who was taken into exile (1 Chron. 6.14). His son was Joshua, the high priest who returned from Babylon (Hag. 2.2). The corresponding genealogy of high priests in Ezra 7.1–5 has Azariah then Seraiah and then Ezra, which is not only a curious anachronism, but an indication that *'Ezra' was replacing the high priestly line.* Ezra does not

appear in Ben Sira's list of famous men (*Ben Sira* 44–50), 'his' period being represented by Zerubbabel, Joshua ben Jehozadak and Nehemiah (*Ben Sira* 49.11–12). Some scholars suspect that 'Ezra' was a literary fiction from the second century BCE, a high priest created as the figurehead for a new development that was seeking a retrospective validity.[80] The complexities of the texts associated with Ezra and their inter-relationships is certainly compatible with this view. 'We cannot but agree with Wellhausen that Ezra was seen, according to the indication of the Rabbinic tradition itself, as the founder not of the Law but of *the biblical canon*.'[81] Yet again, Ezra and his canon is presented as a substitute for an older priestly tradition at some time in the second temple period.

It has been said that there was within early Judaism a twofold reaction against Christianity: against the LXX which the Church had adopted, and against Wisdom.[82] The evidence now available suggests that this separation had deeper roots than the crisis precipitated by Jesus. The whole question of the compilation and transmission of the Hebrew Scriptures in their various forms during the second temple period – 'Ezra' – needs to be examined in the light of early Christian claims that Jesus had been the fulfilment of the temple and messianic tradition. This tradition had been suppressed in certain quarters throughout the second temple period,[83] and after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. J. Neusner, Jewish scholar, made some remarkable observations in his book *The Incarnation of God*. When the Palestinian Jewish community formed the Jerusalem Talmud, he wrote, it was facing the threat posed by the newly triumphant Christianity of the fourth century CE. Since Christianity had its own way of reading the Old Testament, 'the Judaic response took the form of a counterpart exegesis'. The Jewish sages adapted Scripture to their new needs: 'When the sages read and expounded Scripture, it was to spell out how one thing stood for something else ...[84] Their as-if frame of mind brought to Scripture renews Scripture, with the sage seeing everything with fresh eyes.' At a time when the Christians were finding Jesus in the Old Testament as the manifested God, Jewish scholars writing in Roman Christian Palestine 'clearly treated with reticence and mainly through allusion, the perfectly available conception of God as incarnate'.[85]

Recovering the Scriptures, as Jesus and the first Christians knew them may well be an impossible task. One can hope that there will one day be a cache of Christian Greek texts comparable with the Qumran finds. But even with the evidence we have, it is clear that certain fundamental questions need to be asked within the discipline of text criticism and all that is built upon it. Ehrmann showed how theological disputes were conducted through the texts of the New Testament;[86] something far more complex was happening with the transmission of

the Hebrew Scriptures. The founder of canonical criticism wrote this, 'The Church's use of Greek and Latin translations of the Old Testament was valid in its historical context, but theologically provides no grounds for calling into question the ultimate authority of the Hebrew text for church and synagogue.'[87] When the text is set in its wider context, even the little of it we can reconstruct, this simply is not true. To quote Kraft again: 'My conclusion and intuition, with regard to the alleged "Christian" tampering with Jewish Scriptures is that a thorough re-examination of the problem is in order, and that a strictly controlled approach will, in the long run, serve us well in the quest for a more satisfactory understanding of our Christian and Jewish heritages'.[88] Muslim too.

What we are likely to recover is the tradition of first temple, which survived in many forms and contexts, but was excluded from the surface form of the MT. The seventh-century BCE 'reformers' in the time of Josiah were the first to obscure the world of the temple. This situation was reinforced by the triumph of the group who returned from Babylon in the sixth century and set up the second temple, 'Ezra' – condemned by the Enoch tradition and by all who regarded the second temple period as the age of wrath. It was reinforced yet again with the formation of the Hebrew canon and the text which became the MT – 'Ezra', and eventually the Western Old Testament. The world of the first temple and its high priestly tradition survived into the early Church, in many of the allusions in both early Rabbinic and early Christian texts, and in so much of what has been identified as deviation from Christianity or Judaism. The world of the first temple and its high priesthood survived in the Hekhalot texts, which, as Schäfer observed, seem to be independent of the canonical Hebrew Scriptures.[89] It underlies the Gnostic systems, the Kabbalah and Sufism. It also shaped the Liturgy of the Church.

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. First published in the *Journal of Higher Criticism* 2.1 (1995) pp. 31–67. This present version has some corrections and additions to the references.
2. It is inappropriate to distinguish too sharply between 'Jewish' and 'Christian' in the years immediately after the beginning of the Church: see R. Murray, 'Jews, Hebrews and Christians. Some needed distinctions', *Nov. Test.* 24 (1982).
3. J. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture. A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea*, London and Philadelphia, 1972, vol. 2, pp. 458ff., 486ff.
4. See my book *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God.* London, 1992.
5. M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, MA, 1973, p. 251.
6. M. Hengel, *Son of God*, London, 1976, p. 2.
7. Daniélou, *op cit.* (note 3 above), p. 447.
8. Daniélou, 'Les traditions Secrètes des Apotres', *Eranos Jahrbuch* 31 (1962) p. 203.
9. See my book *Great Angel, op. cit.* (note 4 above).
10. See my book *The Gate of Heaven*, London, 1991, pp. 150–77.
11. W. A. Meeks, 'Moses as God and King' in *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough,* ed. J. Neusner, Leiden, 1970.
12. Daniélou, *op. cit.* (note 3 above), pp. 451, 453.
13. Hebrew *panim* can be translated either 'face' or 'presence'.
14. See my book *Gate of Heaven, op. cit.* (note 10 above), pp. 150–77.
15. Text in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* vol. 1, London, 1983.
16. W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* vol. 1, Cambridge, 1991, p. 173.
17. I worked out this theme in more detail several years after this article was published in my book *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000, pp. 109–13, where the letter to the church at Laodicea (Rev. 3.14–22) depicts the heavenly LORD as Wisdom returning to dwell with those who open the door.
18. G. H. Dix, 'The Influence of Babylonian Ideas on Jewish Messianism', *JTS* 26 (1925) pp. 241–56.
19. By tradition a Levite, Acts 4.36, and so with temple roots.
20. R. P. C. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, London, 1954, pp. 67–69, 71.
21. See my books *Gate of Heaven, op. cit.* (note 10 above) and *Great Angel, op. cit.* (note 4 above).
22. E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, New York,

1953, vol. 4, p. 88; also my book *The Older Testament. The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity*, London, 1987, p. 221.
23. Num. 18.7 and LXX Num. 3.10.
24. *On Numbers* Homily 5.
25. *On the Holy Spirit* 66.
26. E. Amand de Mendieta, *The Unwritten and Secret Apostolic Traditions in the Theological Thought of St Basil of Caesarea, SJT* Occasional Papers 13 (1965), p. 41.
27. R. P. C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church*, London, 1962, p.184.
28. Daniélou, *op. cit.* (note 3 above), p. 488.
29. If that is what the verse means, but in the overall pattern of priestly tradition, a transformation experience seems likely.
30. See my book *Great Angel*, *op. cit.* (note 4 above).
31. Smith, *op.cit.* (note 5 above), p. 247.
32. Daniélou, *op.cit.* (note 3 above), p. 493, referring to Josephus, *War* 2.142.
33. Daniélou, *op. cit.* (note 8 above), p. 203.
34. M. Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, London, 1960, pp. 229, 231.
35. I. Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism*, Berlin and New York, 1982, p. 38.
36. Just as Moses experienced apotheosis on Sinai, according to Philo (*Moses* 1.157), even though this had originally been an experience of the royal cult in the holy of holies.
37. C. W. Hedrick, 'The Tyranny of the Synoptic Jesus' in *Semeia* 44 (1988) p. 2.
38. *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel*, eds H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat (British Museum), London, 1935.
39. These three texts can be found in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, J. M. Robinson (ed.), Leiden, 1996.
40. My book *Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 22 above), argues that we cannot.
41. J. M. Robinson, 'On Bridging the Gulf from Q to the Gospel of Thomas (or vice versa)' in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, eds C. W. Hedrick and R. Hodgson, Cambridge, MA, 1986, pp. 127–75.
42. Ibid. p. 133.
43. See my book *Great Angel*, *op. cit.* (note 4 above).
44. *Op. cit.* (note 37 above), p. 5.
45. See B. D. Ehrmann, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, Oxford, 1993.
46. Schneemelcher, *op. cit.* (note 16 above).
47. This is approximately the traditional length for the pre-Easter ministry.
48. I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, Leiden, 1980, p. 162.
49. Schneemelcher, *op. cit.* (note 16 above), p. 229, quoting P. Vielhauer.
50. See note 8 above.
51. See my book *Great Angel*, *op. cit.* (note 4 above).
52. Cf. *Gospel of Thomas* 52: His disciples said to him: 'Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel and all of them spoke in you.'
53. Schneemelcher, *op. cit.* (note 16 above), p. 36.
54. In my book *Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 22 above).

55. D. M. Parrott, 'Eugnostos the Blessed' in Robinson (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 39 above).
56. This is the theme of my book *Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 22 above).
57. Schneemelcher, *op. cit.* (note 16 above), p. 77.
58. Ibid., pp. 80, 82.
59. Josephus tells this story as the appearance of three angels, no mention of *yhwh* (*Ant.* 1.196).
60. A. F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, Leiden, 1978, pp. 33–59.
61. Text in Schneemelcher, *op. cit.* (note 16 above), p. 372.
62. The familiar *Hallelujah*, always understood to mean 'Praise the LORD', but never translated, could have had another meaning. The root *hll* also means 'shine' and it is not impossible that the acclamation was calling on the LORD to appear. D. Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realised Eschatology in Early Christianity*, Leiden, 1972, p. 101: 'The cultic worship of the Johannine community provided a present experience of the exalted and living Jesus in terms of the recurring actualisation of his future Parousia.'
63. Nikolai Motovilov had a similar experience in Russia in 1833, when visiting Fr Serafim, a saintly visionary and healer, who was said to manifest the divine radiance. 'Then Fr Serafim took me firmly by the shoulders and said to me, "Both of us my friend are now within the Holy Spirit. Why do you not look at me?" I answered, "I am not able, Father, for there is a lightning flashing from your eyes. Your face has grown more radiant than the sun, and my eyes cannot bear the pain." Fr Serafim said, "Do not be afraid, my good Theophilus, you have also now become as radiant as I. You yourself are now in the fullness of the divine Spirit or otherwise you would not be able to perceive me in the exact same state."' See L. Dupre and D. E. Saliers, *Christian Spirituality*, London, 1990, vol. 3, p. 462.
64. See J. M. Robinson, *op. cit.* (note 39 above), pp. 142ff. summarizing Koester's views.
65. See J. G. Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, London, 1921, pp. 117–69.
66. J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, London, 1976.
67. Ehrmann, *op. cit.* (note 45 above).
68. This could be the names of angels for purposes of invocation, or it could be the more mundane 'names of their leaders', who were priests and therefore deemed angels.
69. There is evidence for 20 scrolls of Enoch, 21 of Isaiah, but only 6 of Jeremiah.
70. S. Reif, 'Dedicated to *hnk*' in *VT* XXII (1972) pp. 495–501.
71. R. Eisenmann and M. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, Shaftesbury, 1992, pp. 212 ff.
72. To be buried in a holy place suggests that James was a very important figure.
73. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 1.30.
74. *Hekhalot Rabbati* # 225–28, and see note 48 above.
75. I.e. it was Jewish text that Christian scribes were interested to preserve but Jewish scribes apparently not.
76. The two words are related.

77. 'Sons of' indicating a characteristic rather than family descent.
78. It is significant that the 'priestly' account of the first temple mentions the chariot throne and the veil, 1 Chron. 28.18; 2 Chron. 3.10–14, whereas the reformers' account is silent on these matters, 1 Kgs 6.
79. *b. Baba Bathra* 91b. See also the tradition recorded in *j.Ta'anit* 4.5 that a large number of priests fought with the Babylonians against Jerusalem after Josiah's 'reform' of the temple, and that they were later settled by Nebuchadnezar in Arabia.
80. Translation in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Odes of Solomon*, Oxford, 1973.
81. His father has a vision of an angel in the temple (Luke 1.11).
82. A high priest figure to whom are attributed visions and 'a book of ascents'.
83. He could quote from *1 Enoch*.
84. According to Philo, *Moses* 2.114 and *Aristeas* 98, they wore the four letters of the Name.
85. I have written a book with this title, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000.
86. I. Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism*, Berlin/New York, 1982, pp. 53, 55.

Chapter 2

1. This was first published as an article in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53.1 (2000) pp. 22–32.
2. See 'Sabbatical Year and Jubilee' in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, New York and London, 1906.
3. See Chapter 3.
4. See my *The Risen LORD. The Jesus of History as the Christ of Faith*, Edinburgh, 1996, pp. 61–4.
5. See 'Sabbatical Year and Jubilee' in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*.
6. *The Risen LORD, op. cit.* (note 4 above) pp. 121–30.
7. The Qumran text 4Q Deut^{q} has 'sons'.
8. See Chapter 3, pp. 50–51.
9. See my *The Older Testament. The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity*, London, 1987, pp. 184–220.
10. See 'Sabbatical Year and Jubilee' in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*.
11. Ezra 3–8 says they began in the second year of their coming to Jerusalem, but local hostility stopped the work until the second year of Darius, 520 BCE (Ezra 4.24).
12. This is argued, on other grounds than that of Jubilee, by John Bright, *A History of Israel*, London, 1960.
13. See Chapter 3, pp. 50–51.
14. Using the text and notes in *DJD* XXIII *Qumran Cave 11*.
15. Herod the Great died in 4 BCE, when Jesus was a young child: Matt. 2.19.
16. Translating *qṣy* as 'ends of' rather than 'ages' as in *DJD*.
17. Jesus as Melchizedek is the theme of my *The Risen LORD, op. cit.* (note 4 above).
18. Ibid., pp. 22, 27.
19. Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 2.23.

20. Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2.427.
21. *b. Gittin* 56a.
22. *War* 5.459; 6.99; 6.4.
23. *War* 5.272.

Chapter 3

1. This was originally a paper read to the Society for Old Testament Study in Edinburgh, July 1994, and published in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* 49.1 (1996).
2. G. Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy*, London, 1961, p. 322.
3. F. W. Dillistone, *The Christian Understanding of Atonement*, Welwyn, 1968, p. 47.
4. B. S. Childs, *Exodus*, London, 1974, p. 551; Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament*, London, 1992. The index of *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* ed. B. C. Birch and others, Nashville, 1999, does not include Atonement.
5. See J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, New York, 1991, pp. 1079–84.
6. T. K. Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, New York and London, 1898, pp. 75–76.
7. Milgrom, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), pp. 3–12; cf. W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 3rd edn, London, 1927, p.216: The worship of the second temple was an antiquarian resuscitation of forms which had lost their intimate connection with the national life and therefore had lost the greater part of their original significance.'
8. Entries in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* for 'Day of Atonement' p. 286 and 'Azazel' p. 365; cf. *3 Enoch* 4.6. The name Azazel appears in many forms but the sheer number of these suggests that they are all versions of the same name. The name in Leviticus is *'z'zl*; in *b. Yoma* 67b *'z'zl* and *'z'l*; in 4QEn^{c} it is *'s'l*; in the Greek Gizeh text it is Aseal; Syncellus has 'Azalzel'; the Ethiopic *Enoch* has Asael at 6.7 but Azazel in the *Similitudes* at 69.2; 4QEnGiants has *'z'[z]l*, the same form as Leviticus, whereas 4Q180 has *'zz'l*.
9. P. Hanson, 'Rebellion in Heaven. Azazel and Euhemeristic Heroes in *1 Enoch* 6–11', and G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 'Apocalyptic and Myth in *1 Enoch* 6–11' both in *JBL* 96 (1977). The origin of both Azazel and Semihazah could be the same. Cheyne, *ZAW* XV (1895), suggested that Azazel was *'zz'l*, the mighty god, and R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, Oxford, 1912, p. 16, suggested that Semihazah was šm 'zz the mighty name.
10. The title of *3 Enoch* is 'The Book of Enoch by Rabbi Ishmael the High Priest'.
11. R. Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant*, London, 1992. The most graphic account of atonement in the second temple period is Wisdom 18.20–25; the high priest held back the wrath and prevented its reaching the living.
12. Also Jer. 33.20ff.
13. Ps. 72; Isa. 11.1–9; 32.1–20.
14. M. Douglas, 'Atonement in Leviticus', *JSQ* 1 (1993–94) p. 117.

15. See P. S. Skehan, 'A Fragment of the Song of Moses (Deut. 32) from Qumran', BASOR 136 (1954), pp. 12–14.
16. Philo, *Moses* 2.114; *Abraham* 103; *Aristeas* 93. A literal reading of the third commandment (Exod. 20.7; Deut 5.11) suggests that it applied originally to the high priest: 'You shall not bear the Name of the LORD your God for evil purposes . . .' The description of the high priest Simon coming out of 'the house of the veil' is a theophany (*Ben Sira* 50.11).
17. My emphases.
18. 1 Kgs 6.14–36; Exod. 25.31–37; Philo, *Questions on Genesis* 1.10; 2 Kgs 18.4; Ezek. 47.1–12. See also my book, *The Gate of Heaven*, London, 1991, pp. 90–95.
19. My emphases.
20. Milgrom, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), p. 1083.
21. Cf. W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament and the Jewish Church*, London and Edinburgh, 1892, p. 381 'The most important point [about *kpr*] is that except in the Priests' Code, it is God not the priest who [atones] . . .'
22. F. Brown, S. R. Driver, C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Oxford, (1907) 1962, p. 671, says that *naśa'* is used to mean 'forgive' in older texts and not in Deuteronomic texts; contra Smith, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), p. 349: '. . . the flesh is given to the priests because they minister as representatives of the sinful people . . .'.
23. Douglas, *op. cit.* (note 14 above), p. 114.
24. Milgrom, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), pp. 260–61.
25. Also known as the *Testament of Moses*.
26. Note the terminology.
27. 'Filling the hands', i.e. with incense, means ordination.
28. There are various readings here. The Ethiopic texts have either 'heal the earth' or 'That I may heal the earth'. The Akhmim Greek has 'the earth', *ge*, and Syncellus has 'the plague', *plege*. Either way, the meaning is clear enough.
29. The theme of, e.g. Heb. 9.11–12 or 13.11–12 is that Jesus was the Day of Atonement sacrifice, whereas Heb. 13.13 implies that he was the scapegoat. The *Epistle of Barnabas*, chapters 5 and 7, compares Jesus to the scapegoat.
30. Targum Ps.-Jon. *Lev.*16.21 has Beth Chadure; *m. Yoma* 6.8 has Beth Haroro (variants Hiddudo, Horon). The Enochic Dudael probably arose from a confusion of the Hebrew letters *r* and *d* (resh and daleth) which can look alike.
31. There is similar word play underlying the New Testament, since the Aramaic *talya'*, young one, can be used for a servant or a lamb.
32. L. L. Grabbe, 'The Scapegoat Tradition. A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation' *JSJ* XVIII (1987) concluded thus: 'The scapegoat was symbolic of this archdemon (i.e. Azazel) who would eventually be bound and punished and thus prevented from subverting God's people.' In other words, the ritual did not send a goat out *to* Azazel, but *as* Azazel. Because he only dealt only with the scapegoat part of the ritual, and therefore with only a part of the evidence, he did not draw the obvious conclusion as to what the other goat must have represented.
33. Nickelsburg, *op. cit.* (note 9 above), p. 402.
34. Azazel himself as the bearer of sins appears in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*

13.14, addressed to Azazel: '... the garment in heaven which was formerly yours has been set aside for him [Abraham] and the corruption which was on him has gone over to you'. In 4QEnGiants we find: 'Then he punished not us but Aza'zel ...' J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, Oxford, 1976, p. 313, comments: 'Azazel appears here in his expiatory role (Lev. 16.8, 10, 26) for he seems to be punished for the sins of the giants.' He does not comment on the fact that here again it is Azazel and not a goat for Azazel which is the expiation.

35. M. Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch*, Leiden, 1985, p. 209.
36. 'Sprinkles' *rhantisei* is kept in Aquila and Theodotion. There is the problem of the object of the verb, since elsewhere the object of this verb is the blood, or whatever is sprinkled, and not what it is sprinkled upon, but this difficulty, not felt by the ancient translators, must be balanced against a major emendation.
37. 'Chastisement' *mwsr*, cf. Ezek. 20.37, *msrt hbryt*, where this word means 'bond of' the covenant; and Ps. 2.3, the 'bonds' of the LORD's Anointed, in a cosmic covenant context. Similarly Jer. 2.20; 5.5.
38. Identical consonants in Exod. 26.4,10 mean 'something to join together the curtains of the tabernacle'.
39. Milgrom, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), p. 347.
40. Two goats, because the 'resurrection' of the king/high priest could take place in the holy of holies, but the resuscitation of a dead goat could not. See my 'Hezekiah's Boil', *JSOT* 95 (2001) pp. 31–42.
41. According to Acts 4.36 Barnabas was a Levite and would have known the temple practice of his time.
42. The recognition motif is common throughout this material: Isa. 52.13–15; *1 En.* 62.1; 108.14–15; *2 Esdr.* 7.37; *Wisd.* 5.1ff. is an adaptation of the theme; *2 Bar.* 51.4–6.
43. This builds upon the theory set out in my book *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God*, London, 1992. Jesus was believed to be the manifestation/incarnation of Yahweh.
44. See W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God*, ET, London, 1957, p. 97n.

Chapter 4

1. This section was first published as an Excursus in my book *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000.
2. In the Temple Scroll calendar (11QT), the Day of Atonement always falls on a Friday, but Passover always falls on a Tuesday.
3. G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London, (1945) 1949, p. 186.
4. Ibid., p. 225.
5. Cf. the opening words of the *Gospel of Thomas*: 'The words of the living [i.e. resurrected] Jesus'.
6. M. Idel, *Kabbalah. New Perspectives*, New Haven and London, 1988, p. 168.
7. G. Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, Pennsylvania, 1995, p. 48.

8. Ibid., p. 57.
9. J. Vanderspoel, 'Merkavah Mysticism and Chaldean Theurgy' in *Religion in the Ancient World*, M. Dillon (ed.), Amsterdam, 1999, pp. 511–22.
10. Dix, *op. cit.* (note 3 above), p. 252.
11. Reading R. H. Charles's translation.
12. C. Kucharek, *The Byzantine Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, Ontario, 1971.
13. This is implied here in the Greek of Theodotion.
14. This reference cannot be identified, but it is not impossible that something relevant to Christian origins has dropped from the Hebrew Scriptures, as can be seen from the Qumran texts of Deuteronomy 32.8 (which mentions 'the sons of God' who have disappeared from the MT at this point), Deuteronomy 32.43 (where the Qumran Hebrew corresponds to the longer LXX) and Isaiah 52.14 (which identifies the Suffering Servant as *the Anointed One* and not, as in the MT, the disfigured one).

Chapter 5

1. This is developed from a paper read in Dublin in November 2000, subsequently published in *Sourozh. A Journal of Orthodox Life and Thought*, 83 (March 2001).
2. E.g. H. Taussig, *Many Tables. The Eucharist in the New Testament and Liturgy Today*, London and Philadelphia, 1990, esp. pp. 21–35, which argues that the common Greco-Roman meal tradition was adapted for meetings of religious organisations and Jewish festival meals.
3. E. Werner, *The Sacred Bridge*, London and New York, 1959, p. 11; W. Oesterley, *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy*, Oxford, 1925, p. 87.
4. The canonical Gospels also present Jesus as the high priest, although not by name.
5. A. Chavasse, 'A Rome, le Jeudi-saint au VIIe siècle, d'après un vieil ordo', *Revue d'histoire Ecclésiastique* 50 (1955) pp. 21–35, p. 24.
6. When the high priest entered the holy of holies and sprinkled blood on the *kapporet* ('mercy seat' over the ark) and in front of the *kapporet* (Lev. 16.15).
7. The quotations concerning the Lateran basilica, also note 5 above, are from S. de Blaauw, 'The Solitary Celebration of the Supreme Pontiff. The Lateran basilica as the new temple in the medieval liturgy of Maundy Thursday' in *Omnes Circumadstantes ... presented to Herman Wegman*, C. Caspers and M. Schneiders (eds), Kampen, 1990, pp. 120–43 (pp. 121, 134, 143).
8. Werner, *op. cit.* (note 3 above), pp. 68, 75, 88.
9. W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 3rd edn, London, 1927, p. 216.
10. F. W. Dillistone, *The Christian Understanding of Atonement*, Welwyn, 1968, p. 47.
11. *The Mystery of Salvation*, 1995, pp. 96ff.

12. The Bread of the Presence was for Aaron and his sons (Lev. 24.9) but later tradition said it was eaten by all the priests (*m. Menahoth* 11.7).
13. A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century BC*, Oxford, 1923, p. xxii.
14. The 'shewbread' in the older English translations of the Bible.
15. Although 'Palm Sunday' is clearly a Tabernacles procession, as described in *m. Sukkah* 4.5. R. D. Richardson, in his supplement to H. Lietzmann, *Mass and the LORD's Supper*, Leiden, 1979, pp. 625ff., argued that the Eucharist was not rooted in Passover, contra e.g. J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, London, 1966. The theory that the Eucharist was a meal liturgy (e.g. G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London, 1945) is also criticized, pp. 656ff.
16. B. Longenekkar, 'The Unbroken Messiah', *New Testament Studies* 41 (1995) pp. 428–41, suggests why the unbroken Passover might have been significant for John.
17. The covenant element does not appear in many early liturgies; see Richardson in Lietzmann, *op. cit.* (note 15 above), p. 480.
18. Cf. the prayer of the veil in the Liturgy of St James: 'Having been counted worthy to enter the place where your glory dwells, and to be within the veil, and to look upon the holy of holies ...'.
19. Eusebius, *History* 6.16: 'a scroll in a jar near Jericho'.
20. See Chapter 1.
21. The orientation of early church and synagogue buildings did not necessarily correspond with their declared directions for prayer. See J. Wilkinson, 'Orientation Jewish and Christian' in *PEQ* (January–June 1984) pp. 16–30.
22. See my *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000.
23. *DJD* XXIII, 11QMelch 4–5.
24. Amos 3.12 (LXX) refers to 'those priests in Damascus' as a remnant, along with Samaria, of something destroyed. See J. Sawyer, 'Those Priests in Damascus', *ASTI* viii (1970) vol. 7, pp. 123–30.
25. Perhaps 'firstfruits'; thus Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Harmondsworth, 1997, p. 105; but *DJD* I (Oxford, 1955) p. 117 'la première bouchée'.
26. CD VIII Ms B also mentions the saving power of the mark described by Ezekiel; see Vermes, *op. cit.* (note 25 above), p. 133.
27. My book of that name, published London, 1987.
28. He died in 387 CE.
29. An anachronism here, but it makes for clarity.
30. Cf. *The Acts of Thomas* 27, an *epiklesis* over the anointing oil: 'Come Thou Holy Name of the Christ', with 'come' repeated eight times, after which the anointed see a human form and then at dawn share the bread of the Eucharist.
31. Compare the reconstructions in G. Dix, *op. cit.* (note 15 above), pp. 178ff. and A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 49ff.
32. E.g. Justin (*Apol.* 1.33), explaining Luke 1.31, says that the Spirit and the Power of God are the Word; see also my *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God*, London, 1992, p. 130.

33. Solomon prayed for Wisdom to come to him. The later text probably preserves the original significance of this (*Wisd.* 8.13). She gave immortality. The older text is sanitized; Solomon went to the great high place at Gibeon and there asked for Wisdom (1 Kgs 3.6–9).
34. M. Idel, *Kabbalah. New Perspectives*, New Haven and London, 1988, p. 168.
35. See L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia, 1909, vol. 1, pp. 50ff.
36. This seems to have been an ancient pattern, but the Hebrew and Greek texts of Exodus are notoriously divergent, and any discussion of the affairs of the holy of holies was forbidden.
37. See Chapter 8.
38. There is no second verb, despite the English versions. The Hebrew is simply 'worshipped the LORD and the king'.
39. A similar sequence appears in *3 En.* 13–15.
40. This is a possible reading of *hqrbwhy*, cf. Ezra 6.10, 17 and B130 of Theodotion where *prosechthe* or *prosenechthe* has a sacrificial sense.
41. The whole sequence is that of Dan. 7; there is even the textual confusion in 47.4, where one text tradition has *qareba* = offered, and the other has *baseha* = come. See R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 1912, p. 92. The link between the self sacrifice of the high priest and his rebirth (as a child of Wisdom) is probably echoed in the Zohar: Each night the righteous souls ascend to heaven where the angels wait to offer them as a sacrifice to their Master. At the place of sacrifice 'all the souls are absorbed into the Supreme Point; as a woman conceives a child, so does the Supreme Point conceive them ... the souls then re-emerge, they are born anew, each soul being fresh and new as at its former birth' (*Z. Exodus* 213b).
42. E.g. J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, New York, 1991.
43. The high priest's duties are listed in *Ben Sira* 45.16: to offer sacrifice, to offer incense as the *'azkarah* and make atonement.
44. This is seen clearly in the myth of atonement, when the four archangels bind Azazel and then cleanse and heal the earth, to renew its fertility: *1 En.* 10.22.
45. *Against Celsus* 6.43, in both Greek and Latin texts.
46. This was associated especially with the year of Jubilee, see Chapter 2, above.
47. Targum Ps. Jon. Exod. 24.8 was perhaps aware of this and made the blood of the Sinai covenant an expiation.
48. *De Anima et Resurrectione* PG 46.132–36; *Oratio in Diem Natalem Christi* PG 46.1128–37.
49. *m. Sukkah* 4.5.
50. This is similar to the practice at the Ka'abah.
51. J. Daniélou, 'La Fête des Tabernacles dans l'exégèse patristique', *Studia Patristica*, Berlin, 1957, vol. 1, pp. 262–79, p. 277.
52. *m. Menaḥoth* 11.7 and note in H. Danby, *The Mishnah*, Oxford, 1989, p. 509.
53. I believe it is.
54. The verse has a significantly shorter form in the MT than in 4Q Deut^{q} or the LXX, perhaps because it was a key proof text in Heb. 1.6 and was altered in the post-Christian era.

55. Cf. the prayer of the Cherubic Hymn in the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom: 'For thou art he that offers and is offered, both he that receives and he that is given.' (I am grateful to Bishop Basil of Sergievo for this reference.)
56. Little has been published on this subject, but see R. Gane, 'Bread of the Presence and Creator in Residence', *VT* XLII.2 (1992) pp. 179–203. It may be significant that Jesus' first Sabbath controversy mentioned the eating of the Bread of the Presence and who was permitted to do this (Mark 2.23–28).
57. The bread was *leḥem panim*, literally bread of presence or faces, and was *ma'reket* spread out, *tamiyd*, perpetually, with pure incense before the face/presence of the LORD. LXX says salt was set with it, Lev. 24.7–9. Similar language occurs in Ps. 23.5: 'You spread out a table before me/ my face.'
58. The verb is *'rk*, set out, but there is a possible link to the *Gospel of Philip*, CG III.2.63, which describes Jesus as the Eucharist because he was the one 'spread out', here meaning crucified. There is word play on the Syriac *pharisatha*. A. de Conick, 'The True Mysteries. Sacramentalism in the *Gospel of Philip*', *Vigiliae Christianae* 55 (2001) pp. 225–61, suggests that the sequence of sacraments in this *Gospel* corresponds to a progress into the temple, the Eucharist taking place in the *hekal*, thus linking the Eucharist to the shewbread.
59. Or, the table was silver (*b.Menaḥoth* 99a), but this does not affect the argument.
60. The most holy items were deemed to impart holiness, e.g. the altar, Exod. 29.37; its vessels, Exod. 30.29; the cereal offering eaten in the holy place, Lev. 6.17–18 (English numbering).
61. Hence the original significance of the commandment not to bear the Name of the LORD lightly, 'for the LORD will not hold him guiltless' (Exod. 20.7).
62. Alfred Marx, *Les Offrandes Végétales dans l'Ancient Testament*, Leiden, 1994.
63. *'azkarah* is a noun formed from the hiph'il form of the verb *zkr* (see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford, 1910, #85b) and so is equivalent to *hazkiyr*.
64. Onkelos and Neofiti *l'dkrh*.
65. Cf. possible translations of Exod. 3.15: 'This is my Name and thus I am to be invoked/remembered [*zikri*]'; Ps. 6.5: 'In death there is no invoking thee, *zikreka*, and in Sheol who can praise you?'; and Isa. 26. 13: 'Other gods besides you have ruled over us, but you alone we have invoked by name, *nazkiyr*'.
66. A similar emphasis is found in later Jewish texts. See J. Goldin, 'Not by means of an angel and not by means of a messenger' in *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough*, J. Neusner (ed.) (Supplements to *Numen* XIV), Leiden, 1970.
67. Targum Onkelos (*Lev.* 24) describes the Bread of the Presence as the most sacred of the oblations.
68. It is interesting that the 1971 ARCIC statement on the Eucharist, section 5, says that the *anamnesis* makes Christ present, i.e. it is in effect

an invocation: 'The elements are not mere signs. Christ's body and blood become really present.' It is important to distinguish between memorial 'We are there' and invocation 'He is here'. Although reasoning from the Passover memorial, 'making effective in the present an event in the past', it was not the original Passover sacrifice that was made present in the Passover memorial, as another animal was offered each year.

69. V. A. Hurowitz, 'Solomon's Golden Vessels (1 Kings 7.48–50) and the Cult of the First Temple' in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells. Studies in Biblical, Jewish and Ancient Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in honour of Jacob Milgrom*, D. P. Wright, D. N. Freedman and A. Hurowitz (eds), Winona Lake, 1995, pp. 151–64, suggests that the P source shows the reformed cult, and that the incorporated older lists of vessels are signs that the original cult was more anthropomorphic.
70. 'I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes' (Luke 22.18).
71. See pp. 129ff and p. 334 n. 84.
72. Reading with R. H. Charles.
73. See also H. L. Jansen, 'The Consecration in the Eighth Chapter of the T. Levi' in *The Sacral Kingship. Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference for the History of Religions, Rome 1955*, Leiden, 1959, pp. 356–65.
74. Later Jewish tradition remembered that the Shekinah had gone into exile at that time and this may be the key to understanding Ezekiel's vision by the River Chebar. To say that this is an obscure text is an understatement, but it was certainly forbidden reading in later times. This may be because it was a vision of Wisdom leaving Jerusalem; later Christian art seems to have understood it in this way. Ezekiel saw a figure on the throne above the firmament, but underneath the firmament he saw the four living ones and something fiery in their midst. The main mover in this vision was the Spirit, and where she went, the 'wheels' went. These wheels, or rings, were brilliant and full of points of light ('eyes'). They were a wheel within a wheel, concentric rings of light. When they moved, it was the sound of Shaddai, a word which can mean breasts. In Ezekiel 10, we read that the wheels moved with the Spirit of Life who was in them. This curious description of the One enthroned above the firmament and the fiery female spirit beneath became the ikon of the Holy Wisdom, traditionally depicted as a winged angel of fire, crowned and enthroned. She is surrounded by two concentric rings of light, and these are radiant with points of light. She holds a scroll.
75. Compare Jer. 44.18, the cult of the Queen abandoned (in the time of Josiah), and *1 En.* 93.8, Wisdom abandoned just before the first temple was destroyed.
76. See W. E. Rast, 'Cakes for the Queen of Heaven' in *Scripture in History and Theology. Essays in Honour of J. Coert Rylaarsdam*, A. L. Merrill and T. W. Overholt (eds), Pittsburgh, 1977, pp. 167–80.
77. See M. Delcor, 'Le Culte de la Reine du Ciel selon Jer. 7.18, 44.17–19, 25 et ses Survivances' in *Von Kanaan bis Kerala. FS fur J.P.M. van der Ploeg*, W. C. Delsman et al. (eds), Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1982, pp. 101–21.
78. Cakes for the female deity had been baked in a special oven shaped like a beehive, according to the explanation of a terracotta model found off the

coast of Tyre. Said to be a ceremonial baking scene, it is a priest blessing the bread which has been baked in a beehive-shaped oven in the centre of the group; see W. Culican, 'A Votive Model from the Sea', *PEQ* (July–December 1976). A beehive-shaped oven was also used for the Bread of the Presence, although the texts are obscure (*b. Menaḥoth* 95a, *j. Menaḥoth* 11).

79. See Rast, *op. cit.* (note 76), p. 167.
80. G. G. Scholem, respectively *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, New York, 1965, p. 126, and *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York, 1961, pp. 275, 278.
81. This is one of the themes in the Maundy Thursday service in the Orthodox Church, linking the Last Supper to Wisdom's table.
82. Moses was identified as the manna, the bread from heaven, see G. Vermes, 'He is the Bread. Targum Neofiti on Exodus 16.15' in *Post Biblical Jewish Studies*, Leiden, 1975, pp. 139–46.
83. F. C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy Catholic and Evangelical*, Minneapolis, 1997, p. 60.
84. Most recently M. Scott, 'Sophia and the Johannine Jesus', *JSNT*, Supp. 71 (1992).
85. Eusebius' oration to the Bishop of Tyre (*History* 10.4) shows that the new churches were built in conscious imitation of the temple and its priesthood, but this does not mean it was an innovation.
86. Many priests in Jerusalem joined the church (Acts 6.7).
87. Bread, *leḥem*, is very similar to the rare word *l'ḥwm*, which LXX Zeph. 1.17 renders *sarx*, flesh. For Jesus as the female Wisdom figure, see my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 22 above), pp. 109–13.
88. Ikons of Christ enthroned and of Wisdom enthroned each have in the halo *ho on*, the Greek equivalent of the Tetragrammaton, the Name.
89. At the end of the second temple period it was eaten by the priests on duty (*m. Menaḥoth* 11.7).
90. Illustration of sixteenth-century example (now in the Moscow Kremlin Museum) in *The Art of Holy Russia. Icons from Moscow 1400–1660*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1998, item 35 p. 187. The commentary says that the ikon depicts, among other things, the appearance of the Virgin three days after her death. She has her right hand raised in blessing, whilst the left holds a scroll. Thus she is presented as Wisdom, the high priestly figure giving her blessing.
91. *Didache* 14 describes the Sunday Eucharist and quotes Mal. 1.11, the oracle of the pure offering.
92. Mary Douglas, 'The Eucharist; Its Continuity with the Bread Sacrifice of Leviticus' *MT* 15.2 (1999) pp. 209–24, draws similar conclusions, using the methods of an anthropologist and on the basis of a different set of materials. Building on A. Marx, *op. cit.* (note 62 above), that the cereal and animal sacrifices are parallel systems, she demonstrates first why the inner parts of the animal were offered as the holiest portion, and 'what goes for the animal, goes for the loaf of bread' (p. 223).
93. *Kollyris*, and so the group were nicknamed Kollyridians.
94. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, tr. P. A. Amidon, Oxford, 1990, pp. 353–54.
95. I am grateful to Fr Ephrem for this information.
96. E.g. the Copts, the Armenians.

97. See K. E. McVey, 'The Domed Church as Microcosm; the Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983).
98. Eusebius, *History* 10.4. J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 3rd edn, Warminster, 1999, p. 62, assumes, as do others, that this was Platonism. But if Eusebius knew about Bezalel (Exod. 31.2), he may well have known that the original tabernacle was built according to what Moses had seen on Sinai (Exod. 25.9, 40) and so 'copy of a heavenly model' may not have been Platonism on Eusebius' part.
99. See my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 22 above), pp. 279–301.
100. Whatever scholars mean by that phrase.
101. I argued this case in detail in my book *The Older Testament. The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity*, London, 1987.
102. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* (note 98 above), pp. 63–64.
103. Thus B. Kühnel, *From the Earthly to the Heavenly Jerusalem, Representations of the Holy City in Christian Art of the First Millennium*, Freiburg, 1987, p. 82. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 33.1, wrote of the New Jerusalem, built at the very place of the resurrection: 'this being perhaps that fresh new Jerusalem proclaimed in the prophetic oracles ...'.
104. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3.28.
105. See A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte*, Paris, 1958.
106. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* (note 98 above), p. 62, cf. 1 Kgs 6.16–17.
107. Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* 9.16, delivered 25 July 336 CE.
108. See note 90 and B. Kuhnel, *Earthly to Heavenly Jerusalem*, pp. 93–111.
109. Pictures in M. Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, Stroud, 1999, pp. 21–28.
110. 'valde com summo honore', *Itinerarium Egeriae* xxvi.
111. *It. Egeriae* 48.1. The temple was consecrated by Solomon at the autumn festival (1 Kgs 8.2).
112. Letter of Paula and Eustochia in Jerome, *Letters* 46.
113. *It. Egeriae* 24.2, 3. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* (note 98 above), p. 173n, says 'These railings symbolised the firmament which divided heaven from earth', but gives no references.
114. *It. Egeriae* 37.3.
115. *b. Horayoth* 12a.
116. The story is told in 'The Testament of Solomon' in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, London, 1983, vol. 1.
117. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 26.1: 'wicked men or rather a whole tribe of demons through them, had striven to consign to darkness and oblivion that divine monument to immortality ...'.
118. Originally the incident recorded in 2 Chron. 24.20–22, but 'Zechariah' was identified with the father of John the Baptist, and so the *Infancy Gospel of James* 23 locates the death of John's father in the temple.
119. *Brevarius de Hierosolyma* 2, in CCSL, CLXXV, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*. *ica.*
120. Targum Ps. Jon. Gen. 2.7.
121. P. Meyendorff, *St Germanus of Constantinople On the Divine Liturgy*, New York, 1999, p. 10.
122. R. Taft, 'The Liturgy of the Great Church. An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34–35 (1980–81) p. 66.

123. See Chapter 1.
124. Both of these are problem texts in the Hebrew. Deut. 33.2–5 has several opacities, whilst Deut. 32.43 exists in two forms, a shorter MT and a longer Qumran text that virtually agrees with the LXX.
125. Luke 11.3 has 'Give us *each day* our *epiousios* bread', a different understanding which Jerome reflected in his *quotidianus*.
126. This word has another meaning; it can be 'something set upon something else', but any word play, if original, would have to have been in the Hebrew.
127. An Alexandrian Jew writing about 170 BCE, a leading citizen of a high priestly family (2 Macc. 1.10).
128. Quoted, and only extant in, Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* 13.12.
129. There is a picture of the old stamps of the Virgin and St Catherine used in St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, in *National Geographic Magazine*, 125.1 (1964) p. 89.
130. G. Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy. The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Stamps*, Wisconsin, 1970, pp. 47–48.

Chapter 6

1. This has been developed from the paper read in Cambridge in September 2001, an abstract of which appeared for a while on the CARTS website, www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/CARTS/Liturgy.
2. When the delegation from Russia went to Byzantium in 987 CE, they were overwhelmed by the sheer spectacle of the Christian Liturgy. *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ET, S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, Cambridge, MA, 1953.
3. Text in M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, (1924) 1980, p. 503.
4. *Excerpts from Theodotus* 38, in R. P. Casey, *Clement of Alexandria. Excerpts from Theodotus*, Studies and Documents 1, London, 1934.
5. M. B. McNamee, *Vested Angels. Eucharistic Allusions in Early Netherlandish Paintings*, Leuven, 1998, p. 90.
6. In my book, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh, 2000), I argue that Revelation contains the oldest material in the New Testament, some parts being Jesus' own prophecies, others being the first-generation interpretations of Jesus' words.
7. E.g. R. Elior, 'From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines. Prayer and Sacred Song in the Hekhalot Literature and its Relation to Temple Traditions', *JSQ* 4 (1997) pp. 217–67.
8. No colour is given for the long robe, *poderes*, but Josephus (*Ant.* 3.153–54) describes his long linen vestment, girded at the breast. The same word is used to describe various high priestly garments, e.g. Exod. 25.7 or Exod. 28.31. It is the garb of the chief angel in Ezek. 9.2, 3, 11. Only the high priest had a girdle interwoven with gold (*Ant.* 3.159).
9. Hegesippus, a second-generation writer, quoted in Eusebius, *History* 3.31; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 1.29.
10. 'Particularly striking is the very minor role ascribed by Dionysius to the archangels (second rank from the bottom in the angelic hierarchy) and

the concept found in Jewish apocalyptic writings, including Daniel, Jude and Revelation, where the archangels Michael and Gabriel rank as the chief captains of God's celestial armies. This idea has been preserved in the liturgy, which should be considered as the main and most reliable source of Byzantine "angelology".' J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, New York, (1974) 1987, p. 136.

11. Compare Isa. 37.16 and its Deuteronomic counterpart, 2 Kgs 19.15.
12. Apart from those rediscovered at Qumran, which survived for a different reason.
13. The Essenes were under oath not to reveal the names of the angels.
14. Cf. Rev. 1.1.
15. See P. Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, New York, 1992, pp. 114, 119, 116, respectively. This is the best introduction to these texts and shows their great relevance to the understanding of early Christian Liturgy.
16. N. C. Habel, 'Yahweh Maker of Heaven and Earth', *JBL* 91 (1972) pp. 321–37, who demonstrated that during the exile the older title 'Procreator of Heaven and Earth' became 'Maker of Heaven and Earth'. See my book *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God*, London, 1992, p. 19 on the significance of this for Christian origins: the idea of a procreator God was retained by those who continued to distinguish between El, the Father God and the LORD, his Son.
17. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, revised G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black, Edinburgh, 1979, vol. 2, p. 227.
18. This must surely have been the origin of the Cherubic Hymn.
19. *C.H.* 145C in *Pseudo-Dionysius. The Complete Works*, tr. C. Luibheid, Classics of Western Spirituality, New York, 1987.
20. This text is of particular interest as an expanded 'Christianized' version exists, 'The Wisdom of Jesus Christ'. It must have been very close to what someone regarded as Christianity.
21. Thus E. Isaac's translation of *1 En.* 48.2 in *OTP* vol. 1.
22. In all these temple studies, there is a striking similarity to later Muslim teaching. Thus H. Corbin, 'The Configuration of the Temple of the Ka'abah as the Centre of the Spiritual Life' in his *Temple and Contemplation*, London and New York, 1986, pp. 183–262. Having spoken of the three categories of time, that of the sensible world, that of the imaginal world and that of the world of the Intelligence, he says: 'There exists between these three categories of universe a certain number of essential relationships, in that each higher universe is the cause of the one below it and contains, in a manner more subtle and elevated, the totality of the universes below it. Moreover, while thus containing and enveloping the totality of the universes below it, each higher universe is also the esoteric aspect (*batin*) of this totality, its hidden inner aspect or centre', p. 193.
23. Dionysius, *The Divine Names* 817D, 937B in *op. cit.* (note 19 above).
24. See below, Chapter 8.
25. Casey, *op. cit.* (note 4 above).
26. I.e. in the holy of holies which was the second person, see p. 156.
27. In another, later, context, we recognize this as the Kabbalah, where the Name was the concentration of divine power, perceived by humans

through the *sefirot* through whom the divine power unfolded. See M. Idel, *Kabbalah. New Perspectives*, New Haven, 1988, pp. 53–55.

28. Doubtless the origin of the Valentinian claim that Jesus had put on the Name in the zones of light (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.21.3).
29. A basic study of Kabbalah is important for understanding the Fourth Gospel; the texts may be from the medieval period, but the underlying ideas are those of the temple and, as such, are the setting for the Fourth Gospel.
30. Idel, *op. cit.* (note 27 above), p. 59 commenting on the work of Edward Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, Glasgow, 1904, 2.214; and the very influential early work of G. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York, 1961, pp. 122–23.
31. Ibid., p. 64, citing MS Oxford 1649, fol. 54a.
32. Ibid., p. 31.
33. One can hardly imagine Adam cleaving to Eve being interpreted as his absolute obedience to his wife.
34. Idel, *op. cit.* (note 27 above), p. 38.
35. It is not correct to suggest that the warrior angels were a manifestation of the eastern imagination, which dressed angels as imperial guards. The costume may have been contemporary, but the role was traditional. M. B. McNamee, *Vested Angels*, Leuven, 1998, p. 43.
36. See my book, *Great Angel, op. cit.* (note 16 above), pp. 190–212.
37. I. Shah, *The Sufis*, London, 1964, p. 140, quoting Ibn El Arabi, the twelfth-century Spanish Sufi: 'Angels are the powers hidden in the faculties and organs of man.' 'Formal visionary revelation is that which is enjoyed from the realm of images (*'alam-e methal*) through the five outward senses ... such as the prophet's hearing of God's words ... or through inhalation, such as scenting Divine fragrant breezes ... as the Prophet said "Indeed God provides fragrant breezes in the moments of your experience. Take care to be ware of them."' J. Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Symbolism*, London and New York, 1984, vol. VII, pp. 33–34.
38. M. Daly-Denton, 'Singing Hymns to Christ as to a God' in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism*, C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila, G. S. Lewis, (eds) Leiden, 1999, pp. 277–92, suggests that the many allusions to baptism in the letter make it likely that the reference is to the Eucharist, p. 281.
39. Word here is *rhema*, not *logos*.
40. Both texts in *St Ambrose On the Mysteries and the Treatise on the Sacraments by an Unknown Author*, tr. T. Thompson, London, 1919.
41. *The English Ritual*, 2nd edn, London, 1956, pp. 16–17.
42. This psalm also occurs as Ps. 105.
43. The parallelism in 1 Chron. 16.26; Pss 89.5 and 96.5 also suggests that the 'heavens' are to be understood as the heavenly powers. *rw'*, shout, also appears in Ezra 3.11,13, when the foundation of the new temple was laid, which may be significant.
44. Thus LXX *kainiei* having read *yḥdyš, 'renew' for MT yḥryš*, 'be silent' (which makes no sense).
45. Possibly a reference to the Holy Holy Holy.
46. The *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, quoted in Clement, *Misc.* 5.11.
47. Schäfer, *op. cit.* (note 15 above), pp. 25–27.

48. The same sequence occurs in the Hierarchical Liturgy of St John Chrysostom. The singing of the Thrice Holy begins with the choir and is then taken up by the clergy/angels in the sanctuary. I am grateful to Bishop Basil of Sergievo for this reference.
49. E. Werner, *The Sacred Bridge*, London and New York, 1959, concluded that: 'The conception of an eightfold musical modality dates back at least to the beginning of the first millennium BC. It originated in Mesopotamia. ... The principle of the *octoechos* originated not in musical but in cosmological and calendaric speculations', p. 405.
50. Schäfer, *op. cit.* (note 15 above), p. 61.
51. The Name meaning 'He who causes to be' was first suggested by W. F. Albright in a review in *JBL* 67 (1948), pp. 377–81, and developed by W. H. Brownlee, 'The Ineffable Name of God' in *BASOR* 26 (1977) pp. 39–46. See further my book *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 6 above), pp. 125–26.
52. Either Simon who was high priest about 280 BCE or Simon II, high priest about 200 BCE.
53. Schäfer, *op. cit.* (note 15 above), p. 99.
54. Ibid., p. 82.
55. See P. A. H. de Boer, 'An Aspect of Sacrifice' in *Studies in the Religion of the Ancient World*, SVT xxiii (1972) pp. 27–47, esp. pp. 37ff., which cites several examples of the fragrance of the gods in the history of religions.
56. One wonders why John mentioned that when Jesus was anointed at Bethany 'the house was filled with the fragrance' (John 12.3).
57. Similarly Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy* 121D: 'The beautiful odours which strike the senses are representations of a conceptual diffusion.'
58. Cf. Midrash *R. Song of Songs* 1.3: 'All the precepts which the patriarchs performed before thee were mere fragrance, but for us Thy Name is an ointment poured forth.'
59. See H. Thurston, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism*, London, 1952, pp. 222–32.
60. Recently W. Dalrymple, *From the Holy Mountain*, London, 1997, p. 306, 'But the [dead] monks of this monastery [Mar Saba] instead of giving off a foul stench of decay, emit a sweet fragrance. Like the scent of precious myrrh ... It is true. Many scientists have visited the monastery and declared themselves baffled.'
61. E.g. T. C. Vriezen, 'Essentials of the Theology of Isaiah', in B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson (eds), *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, London, 1962, pp. 128–46; G. Widengren, 'What do we know about Moses?' in J. I. Durham and J. R. Porter (eds), *Proclamation and Presence. Essays in Honour of G. Henton Davies*, London, 1970.
62. E.g. J. D. G. Dunn, 'Messianic Ideas', in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah*, Minneapolis, 1992, p. 373.
63. D. W. Suter, 'Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest. The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6–16' *HUCA* 50 (1979) pp. 115–35.
64. See my *The Older Testament, The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity*, London, 1987, pp. 64–5.
65. The implication is that the elaborate regulations for priestly purity within marriage were introduced along with a married priesthood.

66. The *History*, also known as the *Narrative of Zosimus*, can be found in *OTP* 2. It is thought to be a pre-Christian text which was expanded by Christian hands and was widely disseminated during the middle ages.
67. Rechab and 'chariot', *merkavah*, are related words.
68. Eusebius, *History of the Church* 2.23, quoting Hegesippus, who said that the Rechabites were a *priestly* family.
69. *Excerpts from Theodotus* 38, Clement's account of the Valentinian teacher, says that the high priest entering the holy of holies represented the archangel entering the place of fire, which only he was permitted to enter.
70. Thus the Latin text at this point.
71. The date of this text is not known for certain.
72. About 200 BCE.
73. See P. W. Skehan and A. A. DiLella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (Anchor Bible Commentary 39), New York, 1987.
74. Quoted in Diodorus of Sicily XL.3.5–6.
75. Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topography* 3.13.
76. For sources see L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia, 1909, vol. 1, pp. 51–52 and notes.
77. *Jubilees* 2.2 describes the creation of the angels on Day One, and this appears also, by implication, in The Song of the Three Children, the Benedicite, where the heavenly powers are listed before those of the visible creation; in Psalm 104.4, where the angels are listed before the foundation of the earth, and in Job 38.7. For the other view, see *Gen. R.* I.3; Targum Ps.-Jon. *Gen.* 1.26.
78. And there has been a similar tendency to obscure the meaning. Although this reading was noted by D. Barthelemy (*DJD* I, Oxford, 1955) it was not accepted by G.Vermes in his more popular work, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, until the fourth edition, 1995 (p.121), *33 years after the first edition.*
79. E. Werner, *The Sacred Bridge*, London and New York, 1959, pp. 41, 49n, 79.
80. D. Fleming, 'The Biblical Tradition of Anointing Priests', *JBL* 117/3 (1998) pp. 401–14.
81. Cf. Philo, *Moses* 1.158, that Moses saw what was forbidden to mortals when he entered the presence of God.
82. H. L. Jansen, 'The Consecration in the Eighth Chapter of T. Levi' in *The Sacral Kingship. Proceedings of VIIIth International Congress for the History of Religions, Rome 1955*, Leiden, 1959, pp. 356–65, suggests that the ritual described was one known to the writer, and not just a tradition. *of*
83. This belief is worked out in detail in *3 Enoch*, where Enoch became Metatron when he was taken up into heaven. He was enthroned and crowned, so there can be little doubt where this originated.
84. *Tosefta Kippurim* 2.15: 'A bottle containing the manna, the flask of anointing oil, Aaron's rod and the chest sent by the Philistines were all in the house of the most holy of holies ...'. See also p. 90.
85. This is a problematic detail, if it was the anointing that transformed a man into an angel, and the second temple high priests were regarded as angels.
86. Tree symbolism, because it was the vehicle for much polemic in the second temple period, has become confused, but the belief that the oil

was in some way the essence of a significant tree persisted. See my book *Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 65 above), pp. 221–32.

87. Prov. 1.23, Wisdom says: 'I will pour out my Spirit on you', but this is obscured in some English versions.
88. There seem to have been two stages of illumination: those who saw the light and those who became a part of it. Some texts describe watching a figure ascend to heaven, e.g. Dan. 7, but other accounts are of the ascent by the one who had ascended, e.g. *1 En.* 14. In the Book of Revelation, John saw the sevenfold light in the outer part of the temple (Rev. 1), and was later invited to ascend to the holy of holies (Rev. 4). The distinction is familiar from the sequence 'seeing the Kingdom' and 'entering the Kingdom' (John 3.3, 5).
89. B. Lang, *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs. An Israelite Goddess Redefined*, New York, 1986, pp. 60–70.
90. E. Isaac's translation in *OTP* 1, London, 1983, p. 35.
91. See Chapter 8.
92. A sure sign of the second temple redactors at work.
93. There is a remarkable similarity between the description of Wisdom in this chapter and the description of the high priest Simon (*Ben Sira* 50). Both are compared, for example, to a beautiful tree, unusual as a description of a high priest unless it was intended to depict him as Wisdom. See C. T. R. Hayward, 'Sirach and Wisdom's Dwelling Place' in *Where Shall Wisdom be Found?*, S. C. Barton (ed.), Edinburgh, 1999, pp. 88–89.
94. Whatever that meant, *b. Horayoth* 12a.
95. Based on N. Wyatt's reconstruction of the text in 'Les Mythes des Dioscuroi et l'idéologie royale dans les littératures d'Ougarit et d'Israel', *RB* 103.4 (1996) pp. 481–516.
96. J. H. Charlesworth comments here: 'The meaning at first seems to refer to the sense of smell ... the Odist with his skill with words is not only stating that the nose received a fragrant smell, (*ryḥ'* means both "fragrance" and "smell") but that his life (*nšm'* means both "breath" and "living being" and later even meant "soul") was refreshed by the LORD's fragrance.' *The Odes of Solomon*, Oxford, 1973, p. 56.
97. I.e. by receiving the earthly counterpart which 'was' the Spirit.
98. There are two versions of the story, in *Life of Adam and Eve* 36–42 and *Apocalypse of Moses* 9–13.
99. Might this account for Paul's picture of grafting branches into the olive tree (Rom. 11.17–24)?
100. See further, R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, Cambridge, 1975, pp. 320–24.
101. Note again that this was something which had been removed from the temple but would be brought back after the judgement.
102. Compare the D account of Hezekiah's prayer, 2 Kgs 19.15 with the non D account in Isa. 37.16; the latter has Hezekiah pray to the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, the former to the God of Israel.
103. The term 'realized eschatology' as used by New Testament scholars seems not to have taken into account the temple setting of early Christianity and is not therefore strictly appropriate. In the world view of the temple, there

was another, timeless state beyond the veil which was not 'future' but always present. Messengers from beyond the veil could emerge into the visible creation, and the temple rituals were the major setting for this contact between the visible and the hidden creation. They were the hidden things made visible, i.e. they were realized eschatology. The Christians interpreted the historical events of their own times as this 'breaking through' and then, as the Parousia, the return of the high priest, was delayed, they resumed the older temple practice of realization in ritual.

104. We shall see that this ambiguity persists in the later Qumran texts.
105. This is from a reconstruction based on 4Q417.21 and 4Q418.43.
106. The Samaritan Day of Atonement Liturgy, quoted in J. MacDonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans*, London, 1964, p. 311.
107. According to the *Asatir Moshe* 9; see M. Gaster, *The Asatir, The Samaritan Book of the Secrets of Moses*.
108. In the Eastern Church.
109. Also *Zohar Exodus* 231a: 'R. Simeon said: "All the priestly robes were emblematic of the supernal mystery, having been made after the celestial pattern."' The glorious vestments may have been equivalent to the golden garments of the gods which were used to adorn their statues, the human high priest taking the place of the statue of the god in the Jerusalem temple. See C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam. Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Leiden, 2002, pp. 70–71, citing A. L. Oppenheim, 'The Golden Garments of the Gods', *ANES* 8 (1949) pp. 172–93.
110. St Symeon, *Treatise on Prayer* 41, tr. H. L. N. Simmons, Brookline, MA, 1984.
111. Text in M. R. James, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Oxford, (1924) 1980.
112. McNamee, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), p. 41, my emphases.
113. It is characteristic of seals that the name is prefaced by *lamed*, 'to', or 'belonging to'. Similarly the tablet inscribed by Isaiah with the name of his child, Isa. 8.1.
114. Similarly the LXX of Exod. 33.14; Deut. 4.37.
115. See my 'Hezekiah's Boil', *JSOT* 95 (2001) pp. 31–42.
116. Exod. 3.15, Exod. 20.24, 1 Chron. 16.4; Ps. 6.5; Isa. 26.13; Isa. 48.1, related verbal forms, all make more sense if understood as 'invoke' rather than 'remember'.
117. P. Schäfer, *op. cit.* (note 15 above), p. 47.
118. Others were appointed to make music at the high place at Gibeon (1 Chron. 16.39–42).
119. See V. A. Hurowitz, 'Solomon's Golden Vessels (1 Kings 7.48–50) and the Cult of the First Temple' in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells. Studies in Biblical, Jewish and Ancient Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honour of Jacob Milgrom*, D. P. Wright et al. (eds), Winona Lake, 1995, pp. 153–64: 'There is no reason not to accept the unanimous view of medieval Jewish exegetes, who regarded the *mezammerot* as musical instruments' (p. 156).
120. M. Idel, 'The Conceptualisation of Music in Jewish Mysticism' in *Enchanting Powers*, L. E. Sullivan (ed.), Cambridge, MA, 1997, p. 163.
121. Rom. 1.7; 1 Cor. 1.2; 2 Cor. 1.1; Eph. 1.1; Phil. 1.1; Col. 1.1.

122. M. Daly-Denton, 'Singing Hymns to Christ as to a God' in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism* C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila, G. S. Lewis (eds), Leiden, 1999, pp. 281–82.
123. See J. Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, tr. B. Ramsey, Washington, 1983, pp. 60–65. Amos 5.23 was proof that the LORD did not want instrumental music, and it was said that instrumental music had been learned from the pagan practices of Egypt, e.g. Theodoret, *On Psalm 150* (PG 80.1996); John Chrysostom, *On Psalm 150* (PG 55.497).
124. There may be traces of the Platonic theme of the harmony of the spheres, as R. Hammerstein tried to show in *Die Musik der Engel. Untersuchungen zur Musikauschauung des Mittelalters*, Bern and Munich, 1962, but he worked with the mistaken belief that the joining of heavenly and earthly liturgy was a Christian innovation, p. 30.
125. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Anima et Resurrectione* PG 46.132–36 and *Oratio in Diem Natalem Christi* PG 46.1128–37. The Samaritans had a similar hope. When the righteous were restored to the Garden of Eden, and to Adam's original state, their work would be to sing praise and songs to the glory of God. M. Gaster, *Samaritan Eschatology*, London, 1932, vol. 1, p. 182.
126. The best study of this is Fletcher-Louis, *op. cit.* (note 109 above).
127. This can be seen in the LXX renderings of presence, translated as 'the LORD himself', e.g. Exod. 33.14–15; Deut. 4.37; Isa. 63.9. Later Jewish texts emphasized that it was the LORD and not an angel, see J. Goldin, 'Not by means of an Angel and not by means of a Messenger' in J. Neusner (ed.), *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in memory of E. R. Goodenough*, Leiden, 1970, pp. 412–24.
128. 11QMelch 5 in *DJD* XXIII.
129. C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, 'Ascent to Heaven or Incarnational Presence. A Revisionist Reading of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice', SBL Seminar Papers (1998), pp. 367–99; and more recently *Glory of Adam*, *op. cit.* (note 109 above).

Chapter 7

1. It may be that Josephus chose not to record what was seen in the holy of holies. This is the argument of R. Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, New York, 1947, pp. 117–21, who said there were two cherubim in the holy of holies.
2. This implies that the menorah in the second temple was not the true menorah.
3. See pp. 76ff, 135.
4. H. Corbin, 'The Imago Templi in Confrontation with Secular Norms', in his *Temple and Contemplation*, London and New York, 1986, pp. 380–1.
5. H. Corbin, 'The Configuration of the Temple of the Ka'abah' in *op. cit.* (note 4 above), pp. 189, 200, 208.
6. C. A. Gilis, *La Doctrine Initiatique de Pèlerinage à la Maison d'Allâh*, Paris, 1982, pp. 40, 42, 44.
7. von Rad, *Genesis* (revised 2nd edn), London, 1963, p. 45.

8. There is a hint of this in Jer. 38.19, where Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, feared the wrath of the Judaeans, who had joined the Babylonians, more than the Babylonians themselves.
9. The tradition of the first temple was fundamental to Christianity, and this may be why Paul went to Arabia after his conversion, and returned with an emphasis on the pre-Mosaic tradition of Abraham (Gal. 1.17; 3.6–29; Rom. 4).
10. If that is the meaning of 'caused his son to pass through the fire'.
11. See my 'Hezekiah's Boil', *JSOT* 95 (2001) pp. 31–42.
12. Isa. 19.18 prophesied five cities in Egypt where the LORD would be worshipped, one named the City of the Sun, *hrs*. Other texts change one letter to one that looks very similar and read City of Destruction, *ḥrs*, a comment on the legitimacy of the worship there.
13. See pp. 230, 245.
14. J. van Seters, 'The Religion of the Patriarchs in Genesis', *Biblica* 61 (1980) pp. 220–33: 'The D reform is itself evidence that the use of trees and pillars in popular piety was common in Israel and Judah down to a rather late date in the history of the monarchy' (p. 231).
15. See pp. 170ff, 245.
16. Since the work of H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*, Göttingen, 1895.
17. The recent fashion in Western churches for nave altars has again left the holy of holies empty, and this emptying of the sanctuaries will be remembered as the twentieth century's iconoclasm.
18. The tabernacle represented the entire creation: Josephus, *Ant.* 3.123; Philo, *Moses* 3.4; Origen, Homily 9.4 *On Exodus*.
19. L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia, 1909, vol. 1, p. 51.
20. *Midrash Tanhuma-Yelammedenu*, tr. S. A. Berman, New York, 1996, p. 648. This midrash could be older than *Gen. R.*
21. A good summary in C. McDannel and B. Lang, *Heaven. A History*, New Haven, 1990, pp. 80–110. The same division is known in Sufi tradition: 'Visionary understanding is the unveiling of that which shrouds intellectual understanding and resembles seeing with the physical eye. To the eye of the gnostic, the reality of visionary revelation is the manifestation of the material (*molk*), angelic (*malakut*) and the majestic realms of eternity (*qedam*) of the realm of Ordainment (*jabarut*).' J. Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Symbolism. The Nurbakhsh Encyclopaedia of Sufi Terminology*, New York and London, 1984, vol. II, p. 33.
22. *BDB*, p. 135.
23. Cf. Jerome *Hebrew Questions on Gen. 1.1; Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila 78.*
24. See S. Ruzer, 'Reflections of Genesis 1–2 in the old Syriac Gospels' in *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Interpretation*, J. Frishman and L. van Rompay (ed.), Leuven, 1997. Midrash Tanhuma, *op. cit.* (note 20 above), p. 653, commenting on Job 9.11: 'You should know that every soul from Adam to the end of the world was formed during the six days of creation and that all of them were present in the Garden of Eden and at the time of the giving of the Torah ...'
25. See pp. 108, 270.

26. Reconstructed and translated by D. J. Harrington in *Wisdom Texts from Qumran*, London, 1996, pp. 52ff.
27. For parallels in Muslim tradition see W. C. Chittick, 'Time space and the Objectivity of Ethical Norms; the Teachings of Ibn al-'Arabi', *Islamic Studies* 39.4 (2000) pp. 581–96, who describes, inter alia, this 'oneness of being'.
28. In some later mystical texts, the secrets are known as the measurements. See P. Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, New York, 1992, pp. 102, 112, 119; M. Fishbane, 'The Measures of God's Glory in the Ancient Midrash' in *Messiah and Christos. Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity presented to David Flussner*, I. Gruenwald, S. Shaked and G. Stroumsa (eds), Tübingen, 1992, pp. 53–74.
29. The traditional ikon of the Burning Bush depicts Mary and the Child in the centre, surrounded by the four living creatures of the chariot (identified as the symbols of the four evangelists), and then the angels of the weathers: wind, rain, thunder, lightning, etc. These are the angels of Day One, with the Mother enthroned in their midst.
30. See R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch*, Oxford, 1912, p. 231.
31. Vrevoil is the last vestige of the ancient fourfold divinity, known to the Egyptian Gnostics as Barbelo, a name derived from *b'arba' 'eloah*, 'God in four'.
32. Respectively the translations of R. H. Charles, *op. cit.* (note 30 above) and E. Isaac, in *OTP* I.
33. L&S 1274.
34. D. Blumenthal, *Understanding Jewish Mysticism. A Source Reader*, New York, 1978. Schäfer *op. cit.* (n. 28 above) p. 21.
35. J. H. Sieber, 'The Barbelo Aeon as Sophia in *Zostrianos* and Related Tractates' in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, ed. B. Layton, Leiden, 1981, pp. 788–95 argues from the internal evidence of the Gnostic texts that Barbelo was equivalent to Sophia.
36. Something similar happened with an ambiguous word in Ezekiel, the destroying weapons held by the angels of destruction (Ezek. 8.1). In the Book of Revelation they became the 'bowls of wrath' (Rev. 15.7), whereas Jewish mystical writers interpreted them as axes. Both are possible understandings of the original text, see my *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000, pp. 267–69.
37. G. Martin, 'A Forgotten Early Christian Symbol Illustrated by Three Objects Associated with St Cuthbert', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 5th series XXVII (1999) pp. 21–23.
38. Thus Dionysius: 'This is the kind of divine enlightenment into which we have been initiated by the hidden tradition of our inspired teachers, a tradition at one with scripture. We now grasp these things in the best way we can, and as they come to us wrapped in the sacred veils of that love towards humanity with which scripture and the hierarchical traditions cover the truths of the mind with things derived from the realms of the senses. And so it is that the transcendent is clothed in the terms of being, with shape and form on things which have neither, and numerous symbols are employed to convey the varied attributes of what is an imageless and supra-natural simplicity' (*The Divine Names* 592B).

39. *The Fathers According to R. Nathan* is an expansion of the *m. Aboth* written in about the fifth century CE.
40. Compare M. Fishbane, 'The Measures of God's Glory in the Ancient Midrash' in *Messiah and Christos. Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity presented to David Flussner*, I. Gruenwald, S. Shaked and G. Stroumsa, Tübingen, 1992, pp. 53–74, p. 65: 'Quite clearly, the word *tzurot* was one of the technical terms for the angelic forms in mediaeval Jewish speculations on the esoteric divine chariot ....'
41. M. Idel, *Kabbalah. New Perspectives*, New Haven and London, 1988, pp. 122–28.
42. Fishbane, *op. cit.* (note 40 above).
43. G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, New York, 1965, p. 73.
44. This must be the ultimate origin of the Muslim teaching about the 'ḥaqq' of each created thing. 'As to the *ḥaqq* of things other than God, the key to *taḥqiq* in these cases is again provided by the meaning of the word *ḥaqq* itself. The primary Islamic meaning is God, the absolute Truth, the absolutely Real, the absolutely Proper and Right. If each thing has a *Ḥaqq*, it is because each thing is created by the Absolute *Ḥaqq*. Thereby it receives its relative *ḥaqq*. Here, Ibn al-Arabi likes to cite the Qur'anic verse "Our LORD is he who gave each thing its creation, then guided" (20.50). ... The thing's "creation" can be understood as its actual reality and its guidance as the path it must follow to achieve the fullness of what it is to become', W. C. Chittick, *op. cit.* (note 27 above), p. 584.
45. A. Golitzin 'On the chariot that Ezekiel saw', forthcoming, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*.
46. Topos is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew *maqom*, the Place, meaning the place of the presence of God.
47. These were forbidden teachings, 'illumination', see pp. 76ff..

Chapter 8

1. This was my presidential address to the Society for Old Testament Study in Cambridge, January 1998, first published in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51.1 (1998), pp. 1–21.
2. The hanging at the entrance to the holy of holies is *paroket* (LXX and Philo *katapetasma*) distinguished from the hanging at the entrance to the tabernacle *masak* (LXX *epispastron*, Philo *kalumma*).
3. There was a debate after the temple had been destroyed as to whether there had been a veil in the first temple, as *b. Yoma 52b* describes the high priest walking between the curtains to reach the ark: 'To what are we referring here? If it be to the first sanctuary, was there then a curtain? Again, if the second, was there then an ark?'
4. LXX Isa. 6.1 reads: 'the house was filled with his glory', anticipating the angelic song, v. 3, 'the whole earth is full of his glory'. By implication, the house is the earth.
5. W. A. Meeks, 'Moses as God and King', in *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of E.R. Goodenough*, J. Neusner (ed.), Leiden, 1970, p. 371: 'an elaborate cluster of traditions of Moses' heavenly enthronement at the

time of the Sinai theophany ... closely connected with Scripture but at the same time thoroughly syncretistic'. See also note 39, below.

6. The singular nature of the two is seen clearly at Rev. 22.3–4; the MSS at 6.17 are ambiguous, but the singular identity is implicit at 7.9–10; 20.6; 21.22; 22.1.
7. In later texts, only the Prince of the Divine Presence passes within the veil, *b. Yoma* 77a, cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 38: '[The fiery place of the throne] has a veil in order that things may not be destroyed by the sight of it. Only the archangel enters in, and to typify this, the high priest every year enters the holy of holies'; and *3 En.* 22B6: 'The glorious king covers his face, otherwise the heaven or Arabot would burst open in the middle, because of the glorious brilliance, beautiful brightness, lovely splendour, and radiant praises of the appearance of the Holy One, Blessed be He.' The Targum to Job 26.9 is similar. See also M. Fishbane 'The Measures of God's Glory in the Ancient Midrash' in *Messiah and Christos. Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity presented to David Flussner*, I. Gruenwald, S. Shaked and G. Stroumsa (eds), Tübingen, 1992, pp. 53–74, esp. pp. 55–60 where he discusses the veil as the cover for 'the measure of God's glory' which he suggests is a reference to some esoteric knowledge.
8. According to Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* 11.
9. Fishbane (see note 7 above, pp. 64–66), discussing the work of M. Idel that the *ṣurot* in 4Q405 19 are early evidence for mysticism, and his own suggestion that *ṣur* and *dᵉmut* referred to the man on the throne.
10. See also the *Ascension of Isaiah* 10–11 where Isaiah in heaven sees the whole history of the incarnation; and *b. Sanhedrin* 38b 'the Holy One ... showed Adam every generation'.
11. *1 En.* 89.73 describes the sanctuary of the second temple as a tower before which impure bread was offered. *The Assumption of Moses* 2.4 reads: 'The court of his tabernacle and the tower of his sanctuary ...'. An interpretation of Isa. 5 in the early second century CE, attributed to R. Yosi, reads: 'He built a tower in the midst of his vineyard ... this is his sanctuary' (*Tosefta Sukkah* 3.15). This passed into Christian usage, e.g. Hermas, *Parables* 3.2.4; 9.3.1. The Son of God is LORD of the tower (*Parables* 9.7.1).
12. Ignatius of Antioch, *Philippians* 9: 'To Jesus alone as our high priest were the secret things of God committed'; Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 6.7: 'the knowledge of things present, past and future revealed by the son of God'; ibid. 7.17: 'the true tradition came from the LORD by drawing aside the curtain ...'; Origen, *Celsus* 3.37: 'Jesus beheld these weighty secrets and made them known to a few'. See also Chapter 1 above.
13. For a summary and bibliography of these traditions in Canaan, Mesopotamia and later Jewish sources, see M. Weinfeld, 'Sabbath, Temple and Enthronement of the LORD. The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1.1–23' in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, A. Caquot and M. Delcor, Neukirchen-Vluyn (eds), 1981, pp. 501–12; J. D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil. The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*, San Francisco 1988, pp. 78–79; N. Wyatt, 'Les Mythes des Dioscures et Ideologie Royale dans les Littératures d'Ougarit et d'Israel', *RB*, 1996, pp. 481–516.

14. *Midrash Tanhuma* 11.2. See also J. Blenkinsopp, 'The Structure of P', *CBQ* 38 (1976) pp. 275–92. Levenson, *op. cit.* (note 13 above), pp. 78–99. P. J. Kearney, 'Creation and Liturgy. The P redaction of Ex. 25–40' in *ZAW* 89 (1977) pp. 375–87, who worked out one possible scheme of correspondences between the seven days of creation and the construction of the tabernacle, based on the LORD's speeches to Moses in Exod. 25–31. F. H. Gorman, 'Priestly Rituals of Founding: Time Space and Status' in *History and Interpretation*, M. P. Graham (ed.), Sheffield, 1993, pp. 47–64, recognizes that the summary in Exod. 40.16–38 is the clearest link between creation and tabernacle, but does not work out how each day corresponds to each part of the tabernacle.
15. None of the material cited in notes 13 and 14 above makes the link between the traditional order for the construction of the tabernacle and the order of the days of creation.
16. M. E. Stone, 'Lists of the Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature' in *Magnalia Dei; the Mighty Acts of God. In Memory of G. E. Wright*, F. M. Cross, et al. (eds), New York, 1976, pp. 414–52: 'This interest in the measures of Zion seems curiously unstressed in the apocryphal and Rabbinic literatures,' p. 415. Ezekiel did see the temple in his vision Ezek. 40–48.
17. Blenkinsopp *op. cit.* (note 14 above), shows how P relates the creation of the world, the construction of the sanctuary and the division of the land, p. 278. We should not forget that Gen. 1 is attributed to Moses in so far as he was the 'author' of the Pentateuch.
18. R. Devreesse, *Essai sur Theodore de Mopsueste*, Studi e Testi 141, Vatican City, 1948, p. 26n. finds similar ideas in Theodore's work on Exodus, written early in the fifth century.
19. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, London, 1902, p.11. The angels were variously said to have been created, not begotten, on the second day or the fifth. On the basis of Ps. 104, R. Johannan taught that they were created on the second day because the LORD formed the firmament in v. 3 and the angels in v. 4. R. Hanina said on the fifth day because they were winged creatures. *Gen. R.* I.3: 'Whether we accept the view of either ... all agree that none were created on the first day, lest you should say Michael stretched out in the south and Gabriel in the north, while the Holy One, Blessed be he, measured it in the middle [quoting *Isa* 44.24]: Who was associated with me in the creation of the world?' Targum Ps. J. *Gen.* 1.26: 'And the LORD said to the angels who ministered before him, who had been created on the second day of the creation, let us make man.' If the secret knowledge of the sanctuary included the birth of the angels i.e. the gods of Day One (and also of the king?), this suggests that the material antedates the reforming monotheism of the Deuteronomists. See my book *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God*, London, 1992. This is consistent with my proposal for the meaning of *ṣur* in the passages connected with divine fatherhood, namely, that they were deliberately obscured and removed.
20. See also 1QH VI, formerly I; 1QH XVII, formerly XIII, for similar themes and the *raz nihyeh* of 4Q417.

21. Since H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*, Göttingen, 1895.
22. Wyatt, *op. cit.* (note 13 above), shows that Ps. 8.4 also describes the birth of the sons of God.
23. B. Lang, *Eugen Drewermann interprète de la Bible*, Paris, 1994, p. 167, developed in 'Lady Wisdom. A Polytheistic and Psychological Interpretation of a Biblical Goddess' in *A Feminist Companion to the Bible*, A. Brenner and C. Fontaine (eds), Sheffield, 1997, suggests that the wise man was initiated by studying the myth of creation and then being reborn as a divine child in the presence of Wisdom who showed him the creation. Also Wyatt *op. cit.* (note 13 above), on Job 15.7–8 and Ps.110.
24. MT and LXX have here 'face of the throne', but an emendation to 'face of the moon' is usually proposed, by reading *keseh* rather than *kisseh*.
25. Wyatt *op. cit.* (note 13 above); also Weinfeld *op. cit.* (note 13 above), p. 507.
26. The names of the angels were a part of the secret knowledge. The names, as recovered from the Aramaic, 'were for the most part derived from astronomical, meteorological and geographical terms', J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, Oxford, 1976, p. 29. In other words, their names reflected their functions as the angels of Day One: Fire of El, Thunder of El, Comet of El, Lightning of El, Rain of El, Cloud of El, etc.
27. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch*, Oxford, 1912, p. 231: 'The verses are completely out of place in the present context', citing several eminent scholars who had drawn the same conclusion. They had not made the link between the sevenfold knowledge, the resurrected ones and the secrets of creation. For a better understanding see, Stone, *op. cit.* (note 16 above), pp. 424–25.
28. There are similar traditions about Adam: 'The LORD showed him the pattern of Zion before he sinned' (*2 Bar.* 4.3). Jer. 4.23–28 implies a similar experience.
29. LXX and Targums have 'created' for Hebrew *qnh*. For evidence for *qnh* meaning create rather than acquire, see C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11 A Commentary*, tr. J. J. Scullion, London, 1984, p. 290. For the contrary view see R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs*, London, 1994, pp. 129–30. More likely than 'created' is 'begotten', cf. 'brought forth' Prov. 8.24,25. She was established, v. 23, cf. Ps. 2.6, where the king is 'established' on the holy hill, but another possibility is that *nskty* here should be read as 'I was hidden' from *skk*; see W. McKane, *Proverbs*, London, 1970. Wisdom brought forth and hidden, i.e. behind the veil, is possible in the context. Deutero-Isaiah changed the older divine title 'Begetter of Heaven and Earth' as in Gen. 14.19, and substituted 'Maker or Creator of Heaven and Earth'; see N. Habel, 'Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth. A Study in Tradition Criticism', *JBL* 91 (1972) pp. 321–37. In my book *Great Angel*, *op. cit.* (note 19 above) I suggested that Deutero-Isaiah and the exilic reformers fused the older deities El and Yahweh, thus establishing monotheism, and at the same time they suppressed the older mythology of the sons of God. '[Deutero-Isaiah] removed the idea that the Creator God was the Procreator, the Father of gods and men ... The idea of a procreator God with sons seems to have fallen out of favour

with those who equated Yahweh with El ...' (p. 19). This is further evidence that the sons of God of Day One were part of the tradition of the first temple and suggests the reason for their disappearance.

30. The figure present at the creation became the Torah in later tradition. Thus six things preceded the creation of the (visible) world: the Torah, the throne of Glory, and the plans for the patriarchs, Israel, the temple and the Name of the Messiah (*Gen. R.* I.4).
31. 'Letter to an Enquirer' in R. Waterfield, *Jacob Boehme. Essential Readings*, Wellingborough, 1989, pp. 65–66.
32. For recent discussion of possible influences on translators, see J. Dines, 'Imaging Creation: the Septuagint Tradition of Genesis 1.2' in *Heythrop Journal* 36.4 (1995) pp. 439–50.
33. It is frequently observed by commentators that Plato introduces wholly new ideas of creation with a purpose and without the jealous gods of the Prometheus myth, e.g. F. C. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, London, 1937, pp. 31–33. For the first time the world is described as the creation of a father, maker or craftsman and the stars are held to be divine, D. Lee, *Plato, Timaeus and Critias*, London, 1977, pp. 7–8.
34. Fishbane op.cit. n. 7 discusses *Sifre Deut.* 355 when Israel asked Moses to tell them about the glory on high, requesting esoteric knowledge that had not been revealed to them. Moses said: 'You may know about the glory on high from the lower heavens' and there follows a parable about the great king hidden behind a jewelled curtain. The mystics' instant acquisition of knowledge is well known, see above, note 31 and text.
35. Neusner translates the corresponding passage in *Tosefta Ḥagigah*: 'above, below, within, beyond'.
36. See also *2 Esdr.* 14.6, 40–48, that there are 24 public books of Scripture, but 70 others only for the wise, which held the secrets of understanding, wisdom and knowledge. Also Chapter 1 above.
37. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 73 (1981) pp. 669–70.
38. Wyatt, *op. cit.* (note 13 above), shows how this passage was part of the royal Wisdom tradition. He reconstructs the impossible vv. 2–3 on the basis of the LXX to be: 'I surpass all men and possess the intelligence of Adam, for God has taught me Wisdom and I know the knowledge of the holy ones.' The one who ascends to heaven must be the king who becomes the co-creator, gathering the winds and the waters, and he also becomes divine.'
39. I disagree with Meeks, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), p. 369: 'We must reckon with the possibility, therefore, that the legends [about Moses] are composites of the strands which at some earlier stage served disparate functions.' The legends had indeed served another purpose, but had been transferred as a whole from the royal tradition.
40. Deutero-Isaiah heard voices but, unlike Isaiah, he saw no form as he was influenced by the Deuteronomists, cf. Deut. 4.12.
41. Blenkinsopp, *op. cit.* (note 14 above), esp. pp. 275, 291: ' ...beneath (P's) surface one can still make out the contours of an encompassing mythic pattern. It is also possible to interpret the ritualism of P as embodying a concern for man's concrete existence in relation to the cosmos ... *his entire existence on the temporal and spatial axis'* (my emphasis).

42. The passages in *Timaeus* are: the creation is good, 29; the invisible world, 28; the forms, 29, 38, 52; time and eternity, 37; angels created first but the story of their origin is not known, 41; the mathematics of creation, 53, 69; the bond of creation, 31, 37; angels as stars, 38; resting as the culmination of creation, 30.
43. 'Die Anfänge christlicher Theologie', *ZTK* 57 (1960) pp. 162–85.
44. My book *The Older Testament. The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity*, London, 1987.

Chapter 9

1. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, Oxford, 1996, p. 63. The first two chapters of this book are a good introduction to the widespread use of veil imagery in the Abrahamic faiths.
2. J. Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Symbolism. The Nurbakhsh Encyclopaedia of Sufi Terminology*, London and New York, 1984, vol. VII, p. 32.
3. Reconstruction and translation in D. J. Harrington, *Wisdom Texts from Qumran*, London and New York, 1996, pp. 53–55.
4. There is dispute about the text of *The Pilgrim Book* at this point. In a private communication, 7 May 2002, Alexei Lidov wrote that he believed the testimony of Antony about the veil 'because it coincides with other evidence about the presence of Old Testament relics in Constantinople ... I believe he informed us about a very important relic of the Veil and late mediaeval Russian readers agree with me.' See also his paper 'Relics as Ikons in the Sacred Space of the Byzantine Church' in *Relics in the Art and Culture of the Eastern Christian World. Abstracts of Papers and the Material of the International Symposium*, A. Lidov (ed.), Moscow, 2000: '[The *catapesmata*] made the widespread idea of the correlation of the altar with the Sancta Sanctorum strikingly concrete. This relic introduced to the sacred medium of the Great Church the real space of the Old Testament temple.'
5. The Zohar describes the embroidered firmament, but implies that it hung around the sides of a square, with four entrances on the north, south, east and west (*Z. Exod.* 212b).
6. See pp. 178ff.
7. The 'terrible ice' is usually translated tamely as 'crystal' (Ezek. 1.22).
8. Hebrew *ksh*, throne, is usually pointed here as moon, giving 'the face of the moon' rather than 'the presence of the throne'.
9. A reference to Virgin birth.
10. Hebrew *Yahweh Sabaoth* means LORD of Hosts.
11. It is interesting that the craftsman who created the tabernacle, which represented the creation, was named Bezalel meaning 'In the shadow of El'. 'He was filled with the Spirit of God, with Wisdom, with discernment and with knowledge in all craftsmanship' (Exod. 31.1–3).
12. Hebrew *śrd* can mean weave or to be left over/survive.
13. This text was known to Origen in the third century CE as the *Book of James*, see pp. 257ff.
14. Note that in this account, the temple veil is interwoven with gold, and so is exactly like the high priest's vestment. The gold threads may be what

was meant by the 'skilled work' of the biblical descriptions, since weaving and embroidering with a metallic thread is very skilled work.

15. See also pp. 136ff.
16. St Symeon, *Treatise on Prayer* 41, tr. H. L. N. Simmons, Brookline, MA, 1984.
17. The final form of the Book of Revelation was compiled when these events had actually happened, and Jerusalem had fallen to the Romans in 70 CE. The only truly future element in the book is the vision of the new Jerusalem and the new creation, i.e. chapters 19–22. See my *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000.
18. The holy of holies was often described as a tower, especially in the *Enoch* books, e.g *1 En.* 89.50, 73. See also *Tosefta Sukkah* 3.15, which attributes to R. Yosi early in the second century CE an interpretation of Isaiah's parable of the vineyard: 'He built a tower in the midst of the vineyard ... this is the sanctuary'; in early Christian tradition the tower is the Church (Hermas, *Parables* 9.7.1).
19. The *Clementine Recognitions* describes how James debated with the authorities in Jerusalem. In particular, he taught about the two comings of Christ, a summary of his teaching which corresponds exactly to the two Christian additions to the *Ascension of Isaiah* (*Asc. Isa.* 11.1–33, the first coming; 4.14–20, the second coming). See my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 17 above), pp. 193–94.
20. The account of the creation in Gen. 1 was originally one of these visions, and it stands at the beginning of the books attributed to Moses.
21. See pp. 2ff.
22. P. Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot Literatur*, Tübingen, 1982, ##201, 496.
23. See pp. 170ff, 245ff.
24. Y. H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor. Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle and London, 1992, pp. 16–17.
25. See pp. 107ff, 155ff.
26. P. Davies, *God and the New Physics*, Harmondsworth, 1983, pp. 119, 123, 124, 127.
27. This variation is because r and d in Hebrew are very similar letters: *hry* means 'mountains of' and *hdry* means 'glory/ornaments of'.
28. Later tradition does record that the anointing oil was kept in the holy of holies, *Tosefta Kippurim* 2.15.
29. This was the theme of my book *The Risen LORD. The Jesus of History as the Christ of Faith*, Edinburgh, 1996.
30. See pp. 57ff, 84ff.
31. See Chapter 3.
32. Extracts from *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*, T. Carmi (ed.), Harmondsworth, 1981, pp. 196, 199, ##159, 102 respectively.
33. The reference in this passage to ascending into heaven and then crossing the sea is a reference to the temple symbolism of the holy of holies; the heavenly throne was set in the midst of a great sea, e.g. Isa. 33.17,21; also Rev. 6.4. St John later described the redeemed standing beside this sea to watch the angels coming forth from the presence of the LORD (Rev. 15.2).
34. A reference to the high priestly prerogative: they alone were permitted to see what was in the holy of holies (Num. 4.1–15).

35. See p. 164.
36. Christian scholars who were bold enough to investigate these things realized that the esoteric teaching of Judaism, the Kabbalah, was very similar to their own faith. An outstanding example of this is Johann Reuchlin's *On the Art of the Kabbalah* (1517). He recognized the similarities between the Kabbalah, Christianity and the teachings of Pythagoras.

Chapter 10

1. An earlier version of this chapter was read in Cambridge in October 2001 and published in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55.2 (2002) pp. 141–59.
2. Respectively RSV and AV.
3. One of the best is J. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah. Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess*, Cambridge, 2000.
4. Especially Kuntillet 'Ajrud. For a summary of present positions, see J. A. Emerton, '"Yahweh and His Asherah". The Goddess or her Symbol?' *VT* 49 (1999) pp. 315–37.
5. A name derived from 'womb'.
6. N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, Sheffield, 1998, p. 54.
7. Rabitu, corresponding to Hebrew *g*ᵉ*birah* 'which serves at the interface of royal ideology and theology. Both terms denote the queen-mother.' Wyatt, *op. cit.* (note 6 above), p. 83.
8. All texts in Wyatt, *op. cit.* (note 6 above).
9. N. Wyatt, 'The Stela of the seated god from Ugarit' *Ugarit-Forschungen* 15 (1983) pp. 271–77.
10. This will prove to be a very significant detail!
11. Interpres legum Solymarum, et magna sacerdos arboris et summi fida internuntia caeli.
12. J. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, Sheffield, 2000, pp. 61–62, summarizes the discussion but dismisses this meaning of the name. See also S. A. Wiggins, *A Reassessment of Asherah*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1993.
13. First suggested by W. F. Albright, 'The Evolution of the West Semitic Deity 'An-'Anat-'Atta', *AJSL* 41 (1925) pp. 73–101, p. 99; discussed by S. A. Wiggins, *op. cit.* (note 12 above), pp. 153–64, but Wyatt, *op. cit.* (note 6 above), p. 54: 'The goddess Qudshu is a modern invention'.
14. Isa. 37.22,23 can be read as having 'daughter of Jerusalem' and 'Holy One of Israel' in parallel. There is no feminine form of *qwds*, holy, *BDB* p. 872.
15. The heavenly city is a perfect cube, i.e. it is the holy of holies.
16. All the examples in G. I. Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions*, Cambridge, 1991, spell the name Asheratah but not all have *yhwh* immediately preceding.
17. The form of the name as Asheratah has been advocated, e.g. Z. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel. A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*, London and New York, 2001, p. 361.
18. Thus Day, *op. cit.* (note 12 above), p. 66, notes that there are no places in

the OT where the name Asherah has been deliberately altered, as is the case with Baal and Astarte, but he does not consider the possibility that *all* the references in the Hebrew text may have been altered.

19. An example of a writer changing the name in order to convey his opinion.
20. Contra J. A. Emerton, 'New Light on Israelite Religion: the Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud *ZAW* 94 (1982) pp. 2–20, p. 10. The inscription itself is the evidence for Yahweh at Teman.
21. Contra Wiggins, *op. cit.* (note 12 above), p. 178: Yahweh was geographically defined, not Asheratah.
22. See my *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000, p. 207, but more detail in E. R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light. The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism*, New Haven, 1935.
23. S. M. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel*, SBL Monograph 34, Atlanta, 1988, p. 61.
24. Day, *op. cit.* (note 12 above), pp. 63–64 discusses and dismisses the more dubious attempts to find her in the text, but he does not deal with these examples.
25. *Ben Sira* 24 is completely altered by the insertion of v. 23, as is the Wisdom poem in *Baruch* 3.9ff. by the insertion of 4.1.
26. See p. 148.
27. I first suggested this in my book *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God*, London, 1992, p. 54, but H. C. Lutzky, 'On the Image of Jealousy' *VT* 46 (1996) pp. 121–25, and Day, *op. cit.* (note 12 above), p. 62, are not aware of this.
28. See Chapter 12.
29. Discussed in Emerton, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 321.
30. E. Goldsmith, *The Way. An Ecological World View*, Totnes, 1996, p. 194, my emphasis.
31. *kauwanim*, see p. 92.
32. The polemics about the Lady centred on word play such as *'ṣb* depict and *'zb* desert.
33. A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century BC*, Oxford, 1923. A temple had existed in Yeb for at least a century before the local people objected to animal sacrifice. The community were then permitted 'only meal offering and incense as was formerly done', Papyrus 32. There was a temple to the Queen of Heaven at Syene, see B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, Berkeley, 1968, pp. 165, 176.
34. *1 Enoch* is represented by 20 MSS at Qumran (in comparison with 21 of Isaiah, 20 of Genesis, but only 6 of Jeremiah or 2 of Joshua). Figures given in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, M. Abegg, P. Flint, E. Ulrich (eds), Edinburgh, 1999, *passim*.
35. The contrast of two female figures appears also in 4Q184, 185; 'Dame Folly' here is the antitype of the ancient Wisdom. She has robes of darkness not light, her house is the gate of Sheol not the gate of heaven as was the temple, her children are offered a place in Sheol and the promise of glowing in the everlasting fire, rather than transfiguration as angels. The most striking memory of this conflict between the two women appears in the Kabbalah

where the King and his Sister had the temple as their bridal chamber, but when the temple was destroyed, they were separated. The King lost much of his power as a result. He took a new slave wife and she ruled in place of the true queen. The King and Queen would be reunited in the time of the Messiah; see R. Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, New York, 1967, p. 241.

36. The same letters can be read as 'male cult prostitutes' or as 'holy ones'.
37. The Hebrew has 'wove houses for Asherah', *bttym*, but linen garments, *bddym*, is what underlies the Greek 'linen tunic'. The change could be a sign of censorship, and thus the garments were significant. In other texts, white linen garments indicate angels, the resurrected state. In Rev. 19.8 the Bride appears clad in the same white linen.
38. The sacrifice of the Son is at the heart of Christian teaching, and there persisted a tradition that Isaac had been sacrificed and resurrected; see S. Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, New York, 1967.
39. See Wyatt, *op. cit.* (note 6 above), pp. 324–35, also Wyatt, *op. cit.* (note 9 above), pp. 271–77.
40. C. T. R. Hayward, 'Sirach and Wisdom's Dwelling Place' in *Where shall Wisdom be Found?* S. C. Barton (ed.), Edinburgh, 1999, pp. 31–46. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses* 21.3: 'This holy oil, in conjunction with the invocation, is no longer simple or common oil but becomes the gracious gift of Christ and the Holy Spirit, producing the advent of his deity.'
41. *Ben Sira*, however, adapted this description of Wisdom and applied it to Torah.
42. It is fashionable to look for Isis traits in these descriptions and there are undoubtedly similarities in some texts. What cannot be known is the direction of borrowing. If the Judaean Queen of Heaven had been in Egypt since the start of the sixth century BCE, and the 'parallel' Isis texts are later than that date, the influence could have been from Wisdom to Isis.
43. This description resembles Paul's description of the Cosmic Christ in Colossians 1.15–20 but even closer is the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Bride in Revelation 21.
44. See my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 22 above), pp. 319–23. It is remarkable how close is this description of Wisdom to that of the heavenly city, the holy of holies.
45. 'Knowledge, having received the divine seed ... bore the only beloved Son ... this world'.
46. See R. Patai, *op. cit.* (note 35 above), pp. 157–77. There is a similar perception in the writings of Bulgakov: 'Thus there are two personal forms of Sophia: the created and the divinely human, and two forms in heaven – the God man and the Mother of God'; 'The Burning Bush' in *A Bulgakov Anthology* J. Pain and N. Zernov (eds), London, 1976, p. 90.
47. This is the theme of my book *The Older Testament. The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity*, London, 1987.
48. See my 'Hezekiah's Boil', *JSOT* 95 (2001) pp. 31–42.
49. Thus Symmachus *esiopesa*, Vulgate *tacui*. Heb. *dmh*, be destroyed, and *dmm*, be silent, are similar in some forms.
50. The LXX understood this as a prophecy: 'You will hear and not understand, look and not see ...' and has 'and I shall heal them'.

51. The parallels are often lost in an English translation.
52. One of the key words, see note 32 above.
53. Thus *BHS ad loc.*
54. A good survey in J. A. Emerton, 'The Translation and Interpretation of Isaiah 6.13' in *Interpreting the Hebrew Bible. Essays in Honour of E. I. J. Rosenthal*, J. A. Emerton and S. C. Reif (eds), Cambridge, 1982, pp. 85–118.
55. There are variants: you will call his name, he will be called, etc., but these are not important for the argument here.
56. *hdry* is splendours of, *hrry* is a poetic word for mountains of, Heb. *r* and *d* looking very similar.
57. See my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 22 above), p. 107.
58. Thus Rashi, Kimchi, but Ibn Ezra said all the titles belonged to the child. See G. B. Gray, *The Book of Isaiah 1–39*, Edinburgh, 1912, pp. 172–73.
59. In M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, (1928), 1980, p. 5.
60. See pp. 294–8.
61. *The Excavations at Dura Europos Final Report*, part I, A. R. Bellinger et al. (eds), New Haven, 1956, pp. 218–21 and plate xxxiii.
62. See my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 22 above), pp. 140–41.
63. See my *Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 47 above) p. 229. If the fourth Servant Song had been written by Isaiah in response to Hezekiah's illness, the first Song could have reflected events earlier in the prophet's life and thus be the broken tree/menorah of Isa. 6; see my article 'Hezekiah's Boil', *JSOT* 95 (2001) pp. 31–42.
64. See pp. 129ff.
65. In fact, an almond. One wonders if this explains the Greek and Latin for almond *amygdala*, as from the Hebrew *'m gdlh*, 'great mother'. Jeremiah would have had his vision of the almond branch watching (Jer. 1.11–12) at the time of Josiah's purge, when the asherah was removed.
66. See my *Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 47 above), pp. 221–32.
67. *Zohar Exodus* 133b. The survival of the Lady in Jewish tradition is clear throughout the Zohar. See also R. Patai, *op. cit.* (note 35 above).
68. C. T. R. Hayward, 'The Memra of YHWH and the development of its use in Targum Neofiti 1', *JJS* xxv (1974) pp. 412–18 (p. 418), my emphasis.
69. There is a curious memory in T. Ps.-Jon. *Exod.* 6.3: 'I revealed myself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as El Shaddai, but (by) my name Yahweh – *except by the presence of my Shekinah* – I did not make myself known to them.'
70. See pp. 129ff, the distinction between those who saw wisdom and those who became Wisdom.
71. See pp. 170ff.
72. Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, #32.l: 'an orthographical peculiarity ... peculiar to the Pentateuch text alone' for which no real explanation is offered.
73. See p. 171.
74. See Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, #80.l, citing the example of Saray.
75. Respectively from Great Vespers and Mattins for The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos in *The Festal Menaion*, Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (tr.), London, 1969.

76. See also pp. 87ff, 92ff.
77. *l'ha"aṣibah*, whence to the word for idol, *'eṣeb*. Moulds have been found elsewhere which are thought to be pans for baking such bread, see W. E. Rast, 'Cakes for the Queen of Heaven' in *Scripture in History and Theology. Essays in Honour of J. Coert Rylaarsdam*, A. L. Merrill and T. W. Overholt (eds), Pittsburgh, 1977, pp. 167–80.
78. E.g. the altar, Exod. 29.37; its vessels, Exod. 30.29; the cereal offering eaten in the holy place, Lev. 6.17–18 (English numbering).
79. *'azkarah* is a noun formed from the hiph'il of the verb *zkr*, see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford, 1910, #85b, and so is equivalent to *hazkiyr*. The titles of Pss 38 and 70 both suggest invocation, e.g. 38.22, 'Make haste to help me', and 70.5, 'Hasten to me O God'. LXX Ps. 37 (= Heb. Ps. 38) *'eis anamnesin peri sabbatou'*. Compare here Exod. 3.15: *This is my Name and thus I am to be invoked.*' Similarly Ps. 6.5; Isa. 26.13.
80. T. Onk. and T. Neof., *l'dkrh*.
81. 'Seven.' Thus Whiston; also the Dura Europas Torah Shrine.
82. There was polemic about the creation at this time. 'Whom did the LORD consult?' asked Isaiah (Isa. 40.14) but the Targum Neofiti remembered there had been another and rendered Gen.1.1 'With Wisdom the LORD created the heaven and the earth.'
83. See Wyatt. *op. cit.* (note 6 above), p. 83: 'Athirat . . . is geminated with Raḥmay, the two forming hypostases of Shapsh', i.e. the sun goddess. She/they give birth to the two aspects of Venus, Shahar and Shalem, the Morning and Evening stars, two aspects of the one planet, ibid. p. 333. NB Jesus was 'The Morning Star' (Rev. 22.16), because he was the son of the woman clothed with the sun (Rev. 12). Also, N. Wyatt, 'Myths of Power. A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Traditions', *Ugaritische Biblische Literatur* 13 (1996) pp. 224–29.
84. J. Barr, '"Thou art the cherub" Ezekiel 28.14 and the post-Ezekiel Understanding of Genesis 2–3' in *Priests, Prophets and Scribes. Essays . . . in honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp*, Sheffield, 1982, pp. 213–23.
85. *tabnit*, pattern, as in 1 Chron. 28.18–19, the heavenly pattern of the temple, or *toknit*, measurement.
86. *m. Yoma* 3.8; the actual name was pronounced, not a substitute.
87. Hithpa'el of *hlk*.
88. *'bny*, stones, but perhaps *bny*, sons of fire.
89. Barr wisely avoids translating the words! It could mean both measuring and anointed. The *Gospel of Philip* explains that Messiah means both.
90. The word is used of the cherubim on the ark, Exod. 25.20.
91. See M. E. Stone, 'Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature', *Magnalia Dei. The Mighty Acts of God, Essays in Memory of G. E. Wright*, F. M. Cross et al. (eds), New York, 1976, pp. 414–52.
92. The fact that the oracle is now about Tyre shows either that it was re-used – oracles often were re-applied – or it could indicate a play on the word *ṣur*, Tyre, which can also mean the form of a heavenly being, someone of the invisible world. See Chapter 8 above.
93. Hithpa'el of *hlk*, as in Ezek. 28.14.
94. LXX, 'over their wings'.

95. See BDB, p. 198, under *d'mut*.
96. Similarly Gen. 17.1; 28.3; 35.11; 43.14; 48.3; all P, and Gen. 49.25, not usually attributed to a 'source'. There is no equivalent at all in Num. 24.4,16; Ps. 68.14; Joel 1.15.
97. Others are set out in D. Biale, 'The God with Breasts. El Shaddai in the Bible', *History of Religions* 21 (1981) pp. 240–56.
98. *Odes of Solomon* 19.3–5, 'his breasts were full ... the holy spirit opened her bosom and mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father ...'.
99. AV, 'As for the wheels it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel ...'; RSV, 'as for the wheels they were called in my hearing the whirling wheels'.
100. Targum Neofiti and Fragment Targums Paris BNHeb110; Vatican Ebr. 440.
101. Jacob of Serug associated Ezekiel's vision with Mary, but the detail is different. Did he perhaps know of the association but not the detail? 'It is for this that the chariot came down to earth, that through prophecy it might represent the descent of its LORD. And the glorious throne and the blue of chastity that [Ezekiel] saw there is the womb of Mary which He kept closed in order to bear the Son of God', 'Homily on the Chariot that Ezekiel the Prophet Saw' in P. Bedjan, *Homilae Selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis*, Paris/Leipzig, 1910, vol. IV, p. 589.15–18, cited by A. Golitzin, 'The Image and Glory of God in Jacob of Serug's Homily 'On that chariot that Ezekiel the Prophet Saw', forthcoming, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*.
102. It has been suggested that the title means the Name of Four Letters, but this is less likely. See D. Blumenthal, *Understanding Jewish Mysticism. A Source Reader*, New York, 1978. For other texts, see P. Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot Literatur*, Tübingen, 1981, e.g. # 195, 206, 301, 590, where the form *twtrwsy* and variants occurs in such names as Tutrusia Yahweh, the Prince Tutrusia Yahweh, the throne of the glory of Tutrusia Yahweh. See also P. Schäfer, *Hekhalot Studien*, Tübingen, 1988: 'Hekhalot literature seems to be independent of the Bible' (p. 291).
103. She appears also in Micah 5.3 as the mother of the great Shepherd of Israel.
104. Ezek. 8.3: 'the image of the Creatrix who creates', *sml hqnh hmqnh*, a qal and then a hiph'il participle. Hebrew *qn'* means 'be jealous', *qnh* means 'get children', but the pronunciation would have been identical. El Elyon, the ancient deity of Jerusalem, was *qnh* of heaven and earth, Gen. 14.19.
105. E.g. Deut. 32.8, where Qumran and LXX read 'the number of the sons of God/angels'; MT has 'sons of Israel'.
106. R. Kletter, *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*, British Archaeological Reports (International Series 636) 1996, summarized in 'Between Archaeology and Theology. The Pillar Figurines from Judah and the Asherah' in *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* A. Mazar (ed.), Sheffield, 2001, pp. 179–216.
107. In Ramat Rahel and Tel en Nasbeh.
108. Kletter, *op. cit.* (note 106 above, 1996), p. 50.
109. One (no. 232) has a small child.
110. Kletter in Mazar (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 106 above), p. 185.

111. Ibid., pp. 204–05.
112. Ibid., p. 109.
113. Kletter, *op. cit.* (note 106 above, 1996), p. 65.
114. Who was Deborah, 'the wife of Lapidoth' or 'the lady of the torches'? *'št lpydwt* could be read either way (Judg. 4.4). I heard 'lady of the torches' as a suggestion in a conference paper but I have lost the reference.
115. Thus L. Silbermann, 'Farewell to O AMEN', *JBL* 82 (1963) pp. 213–15.
116. See p. 156.
117. D. R. Cartlidge and J. K. Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*, London and New York, 2001, p. 237 n.16.
118. See pp. 168ff.
119. See p. 76.
120. All taken from *The Festal Menaion*, Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (trs), London, 1969.
121. 'The Birth or Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos', Canticle 7, Irmos.
122. 'Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos', Mattins Canticle 3, Canticle 5, Canticle 9.
123. 'The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos', Great Vespers, Mattins Canticle 4.
124. 'Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady', Canticle 6.
125. The translations of Fr Ephrem. The Litany of Loreto is similar.
126. A private communication from Fr Justin Taylor, SM.
127. Cartlidge and Elliott, *op. cit.* (note 117 above), p. 38.
128. M. B. McNamee, *Vested Angels. Eucharistic Allusions in Early Netherlandish Paintings*, Leuven, 1998, p. 97 and p. 304 fig. 44.
129. A private communication from Yuri Klitchenko.
130. 'The Wisdom of God' (1937) reprinted in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, J. Pain and N. Zernov (eds), London, 1976, pp. 144–56, p. 146.

Chapter 11

1. Thus too Origen, *Celsus* 1.15.
2. D. J. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, Oxford, 1989, p. 214.
3. The apologists emphasized the great age of Hebrew tradition in comparison with Greek. Taking the Old Testament histories literally, they calculated the date at which Moses must have lived and showed that it was some fifteen centuries before the time of the Seven Sages of Greece (Eusebius, *Preparation* 10.4).
4. W. Burkert, E. L. Minar (tr.), *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge, MA, 1972, p. 1.
5. Ibid., p. 4.
6. Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, T. Taylor (tr.), (1818), London, 1965, p. 7.
7. Cf. Theophrastus, *De Pietate* in Porphyry, *De Abstinentia* 2.26: 'the Syrians, of whom the Jews are a part . . .'.
8. B. Sass, 'Arabs and Greeks in Late First Temple Jerusalem', *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (Jan.–June 1990), pp. 59–61. The evidence is of sherds with letters which may be Greek. 'The biblical, extra-biblical and archaeological sources testify to the presence of Greeks in late Iron-age Judah', p. 61.

9. My book of that name, London, 1987, reconstructed aspects of the first temple cult and showed how they survived in Christianity.
10. See p. 117.
11. This can be seen by comparing the two versions of the Sabbath commandment: Exod. 20.11, based on the creation, and Deut. 5.15, based on the Exodus experience. Aristotle seems to be mocking the Pythagoreans when he says of the number seven: 'There are seven vowels and the scale has seven strings, there are seven Pleiads ... and there were seven against Thebes. Is it because the number is the sort of number it is that there were seven of them ... or were there seven heroes because there were seven gates?', *Metaphysics* N 1093a.
12. The Hebrew word can mean vessels or any items of equipment.
13. Josephus, *Apion* 1.163: 'There is no book generally agreed to be the work of Pythagoras, but many have recorded his story and of these the most notable is Hermippus'.
14. Iamblichus, *Life* 199. There were similar 'secrets' in Plato: *Epistle* 7 mentions 'the greatest things' (341b), which were beyond words and so not written down (341c). The authenticity of this epistle is, however, debated.
15. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 276, argues that fragments 1–7, 13 and 17 are genuine because they can only be interpreted on the basis of pre-Socratic ways of thinking.
16. Ibid. Introduction and p. 27.
17. Ibid., p. 50.
18. Ibid., pp. 298, 342.
19. F. M. Cornford, 'Mysticism and Science in Pythagorean Tradition', *CQ* XVI (1922) pp. 137–50 (p. 142).
20. See pp. 60, 126.
21. Or, states that they will be holy ones (Lev. 19.2).
22. Or the king being given the divine plan, 1 Chron. 28.11–19.
23. Diogenes Laertius 8.14 and 9.23, discussed in T. Heath, *Aristarchos of Samos. The Ancient Copernicus*, Oxford, 1913, p. 66.
24. See p. 230.
25. See p. 241.
26. Iamblichus, *Life* 12; also Cicero, *Tuscan Questions*, 5.3
27. Three angels see pp. 23, 111, Fourfold Living One see p. 173.
28. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 468.
29. See pp. 173–5, 230.
30. Most of the quotations cited in this section are conveniently collected in G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, 1957.
31. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 165.
32. Ibid., chapter 3.
33. Isocrates, *Busiris* 28, attributes to Pythagoras an interest in temple rituals and sacrifices which he had learned in Egypt. See also C. A. Huffman in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, A. A. Long (ed.), Cambridge, 1999, p. 71.
34. See p. 28–9.
35. Also Iamblichus, *Life* 16.
36. Iamblichus, *Life* 17; also Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 179, that Pythagoras' name was not uttered, Diogenes Laertius 8.10.

37. For a full discussion of the similarities, see I. Lévy, *La Légende de Pythagore de Grece en Palestine*, Paris, 1927, pp. 264–93.
38. See my *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000, pp. 316–37.
39. 'House of holiness', 1QS VIII, IX meaning the holy of holies; see 4Q156.2, a fragment of a Leviticus Targum.
40. Thus *DJD* XXIII (1998), but G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, London, 1997, renders this part of line 5 of the 11QMelch 'will assign them to the sons of heaven'.
41. P. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic. Empedocles and the Pythagorean Tradition*, Oxford, 1995, p. 172.
42. Ibid., pp. 180–82.
43. Ibid., p. 183.
44. Ibid., pp.187, 195.
45. Ibid., p. 201.
46. Ibid., p. 195.
47. Recognized in later tradition as the holy of holies, see p. 341 n. 11.
48. See p. 156–57.
49. See p. 180–82.
50. Kingsley, *op. cit.* (note 41 above), p. 183.
51. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 43.
52. The Unity which was the source of life, see Chapter 7.
53. Burkert, *op.cit.* (note 4 above), respectively pp. 43, 22, 268, 232, 36. It is interesting that the excerpts from Iamblichus, *On Physical Number*, preserved in Psellus show that the soul is produced from a *cubic* number. See O'Meara, *op. cit.* (note 2 above), p. 221.
54. These examples are from the RSV.
55. There is a related word in Job 13.27: 'a *bound* to the soles of my feet'.
56. The limit is often described as a circle or vault *ḥwg*: God walks on the *vault* of heaven (Job 22.14), described a *circle* on the face of the waters (Job 26.10; Prov. 8.27).
57. Hence the question, 'Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?' (Mk 4.41).
58. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 35.
59. The Neopythagoreans did understand Limit and Unlimited to be God and Matter; see J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, London and Edinburgh, 1892, p. 306.
60. See p. 285.
61. Kirk, *op. cit.* n 30, p. 229.
62. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 38.
63. Ibid., p. 45.
64. See pp. 158ff.
65. When the Christians of spoke the kingdom of God what they described was the holy of holies, e.g. in the *Gospel of Thomas*, see my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 38 above), p. 334.
66. Cf. Plato, *Republic* 530d: Astronomy and harmony 'are sister sciences ... as the Pythagoreans say'.
67. See p. 117.
68. See pp. 118ff.

69. What does Ps. 19.1–5 mean? Apparently it is the voice of the heavens declaring the glory of God.
70. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 355.
71. See also G. Strachan, *Christ and the Cosmos*, Dunbar, 1985.
72. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 375.
73. Ibid., p. 378.
74. Strachan, *op. cit.* (note 71 above), p. 24.
75. Ibid., p. 40.
76. These hitherto unknown temple festivals are described in the Qumran Temple Scroll, see J. Maier, *The Temple Scroll*, Sheffield, 1985.
77. D. Tame, *The Secret Power of Music*, Wellingborough, 1984, pp. 248, 250.
78. See p. 35.
79. Strachan, *op. cit.* (note 71 above), pp. 52–56.
80. Iamblichus, *Life* 29.
81. O. Neugebauer, *The Exact Sciences in Antiquity*, Providence, RI, 1957, p. 11.
82. The antiquity of the Hebrew alphabet was an important element in the apologists' claims that Moses taught Plato (Eusebius, *Preparation* 10.5. Also Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 31).
83. Thus Sepher Yetsira 2.2: 'The twenty-two letters: God carved them and shaped them, weighed them and changed them round and combined them and then created with them all that has been created and all that will be created.' Bezalal, who built the tabernacle, also knew how to combine the letters by which heaven and earth were created (*b. Ber.* 55a).
84. In the (much later) Kabbalah, the Sephiroth were the powers which emanated from the Divine.
85. Respectively the qal and pi'el forms of *spr*, and the derived noun is *mspr*.
86. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 437.
87. Iamblichus, *Life* 29.
88. Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 413.
89. Kirk, *op. cit.* (note 30 above), p. 228.
90. Ezek. 1.3. Some scholars think that the vision by the River Chebar in the thirtieth year (Ezek. 1.1) was to mark his entry at the age of 30 into active priesthood (Num. 4.3).
91. See pp. 178ff.
92. When Joash restored the temple it was restored to its 'measure' and made firm, 2 Chron. 24.13.
93. See p. 189.
94. An excellent treatment of these lists of measurements in 'List of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature' in *Magnalia Dei. The Mighty Acts of God. Essays in Memory of G. E. Wright*, F. M. Cross et al. (ed.), New York, 1976, pp. 414–52.
95. Reading with LXX and 4Q Deut^{j}.
96. Ezek. 28.12 is an obscure text: *ḥwtm tknyt* could be seal of 'measurement', but some MSS have *ḥwtm tbnyt*, seal of 'the model', *k* and *b* being similar letters.
97. *msḥ* means both 'anoint' and 'measure' in Syriac, Jewish Aramaic and Rabbinic Hebrew. The hiph'il means to draw in outline.

98. Restored from 4Q554–5, 5Q15, 1Q32, 2Q14, 4Q232, 11Q18 in Vermes, *op. cit.* (note 40 above). Also M. Chyutin, *The New Jerusalem Scroll from Qumran*, Sheffield, 1997.
99. P. Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, New York, 1992, p. 119.
100. *Life*, ch. 29; Burkert, *op. cit.* (note 4 above), p. 85.
101. Burkert, ibid., p. 35, quoting Aristotle, *Physics* 203a, 213b.
102. See pp. 193ff.
103. A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, Oxford, 1928, p. 14.
104. D. Lee, *Timaeus and Critias*, Harmondsworth, 1965, p. 9.
105. See pp. 168ff.
106. E.g. *Tim.* 28a in *Creation* 12; *Tim.* 29d–30a in *Creation* 21–23. For a complete list, see D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, Leiden, 1986, pp. 353–58.
107. Thus Runia, *op. cit.* (note 106 above), p. 135.
108. Quoted in Eusebius, *Preparation* 13.12.
109. A. F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, Leiden, 1978, p. 165.
110. See G. Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, Grand Rapids, 2002, *passim*. Quotation from p. xiii.
111. Also Segal, *op. cit.* (note 109 above), *passim*.
112. See my *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God*, London, 1992, p. 131. The whole of chapter 7 discusses the roots of Philo's Logos in the first temple and the identity of Logos and Wisdom.
113. Runia, *op. cit.* (note 106 above), p. 155.
114. Ibid., p. 240.
115. Runia, *op. cit.* (note 106 above), p. 163.
116. See pp. 249–50.
117. See p. 230.
118. It is interesting to note that the first Christians described Jesus as the Lord and the Author of Life, Acts 3.15.
119. My book of that name, 1987, showed that much of the older tradition of Israel had survived in Christianity.
120. See p. 153.
121. *Op. cit.* (note 103 above), p. 78. The Creator depicted by the reformed tradition could be seen as grudging; some Gnostics certainly interpreted Gen. 2–3 in this way, see *Testimony of Truth* (C.G. IX.3.47).
122. Ibid., p. 66.
123. See p. 134.
124. Eusebius draws on several of Plato's works; I am concentrating only on the *Timaeus*.
125. See my *Great Angel*, *op. cit.* (note 112 above). Also B. Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority*, Sheffield, 1983.
126. There are many different titles for the deities, and it is not clear which is which.
127. This first appears in Jewish sources in *Gen R.* I.9. R. Gamaliel II, at the end of the first century CE, was in conversation with an unnamed philosopher who claimed that the Jewish God had created out of pre-existing materials: *tohu*, *bohu*, darkness, water, spirit and the deep, but R. Gamaliel cited Scripture to show that all of these had been first created by God. The meaning of *tohu* and *bohu* is not known.

128. See pp. 147ff.
129. N. C. Habel, 'Yahweh. Maker of Heaven and Earth. A Study in Tradition Criticism', *JBL* 91 (1972) pp. 321–37.
130. Taylor, *op. cit.* (note 103 above), pp. 129–30.
131. R. G. Bury, *Plato*, Cambridge, MA (1929) 1989, vol. ix, p. 36.
132. Taylor, *op. cit.* (note 103 above), p. 106.
133. J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, New York, 1991, esp. pp. 3–12.
134. See p. 71.
135. See pp. 50ff.
136. W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 3rd edn, London, 1927, p. 216: 'The worship of the second temple was an antiquarian resuscitation of forms which had lost their intimate connection with the national life and therefore had lost the greater part of their original significance.'
137. When Philo deals with Moses' blood sprinkling at Sinai, which the Targum described as atonement, see p. 325 n. 47, he also uses the language of the *Timaeus*, *Q. Exod.* 2.33; *Heir.* 182–85.
138. These bonds appear in some older texts, e.g. the Hebrew of Ezek. 20.37, where the restored are readmitted within the covenant bond, and Ps. 2.3, where the restrained powers try to break free from the LORD and his Messiah.
139. See my *Great Angel*, *op. cit.* (note 112 above), pp. 97–113.
140. See p. 163.
141. See p. 78.
142. Philo knew the Bond and the Image as the Losos.
143. See pp. 157ff.
144. See pp. 178ff.
145. See pp. 169ff.
146. See p. 168.
147. See p. 107.
148. The Hebrew *ṣur* can be read Tyre or Rock/form, see p. 184.
149. See p. 250.
150. See p. 53.
151. See p. 45, reading *'lm*, eternal, for *'m*, people i.e. a covenant of the people.
152. The Hebrew verb is from *ṣur*, see n. 148 above. Isa. 49.8 LXX, *eplasa*.
153. Hippolytus, *Refutation* 6.29, attributed to the Valentinians the belief that Sophia was the fourfold *tetraktys*.
154. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (ET) London, 1974, vol. 1, pp. 162–63; Runia, *op. cit.* (note 106 above), pp. 206–207.

Chapter 12

1. Jerome's *Letters* 104: '... quod a Graecis ecclesiis Latinae ecclesiae dissonabunt ... vix aut numquam ad Hebraea testimonia pervenitur quibus defendatur obiectum'.
2. Preface to Isaiah: 'ne Iudaei de falsitate Scripturarum ecclesiis eius diutius insultarent'.
3. E. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origin of the Bible*, Grand Rapids

and Leiden, 1999, p. 47: 'Are there any indications that they [Jerome and the Reformation Bible translators] chose the MT in contradistinction to alternate Hebrew texts forms of whose existence they were aware but which they passed over?'

4. *Letter to Julius Africanus* 5(9).
5. Ibid., 4(8). See S. P. Brock, 'Origen's Aims as a Textual Critic of the Old Testament', *Studia Patristica* X (1970) pp. 215–18.
6. Ulrich, *op. cit.* (note 3 above), p. 224.
7. D. Barthélemy, 'Origène et le texte de l'Ancien Testament' in *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, Jacques Fontaine (ed.), Paris, 1972, pp. 247–61.
8. *On Numbers*: Homily 28.
9. 'And Esdras said to the people, This Passover is our Saviour and refuge. And if you have understood and it has entered into your hearts that we are about to humiliate him on a cross and afterwards hope in him, then this place will never be forgotten saith the LORD of Hosts. But if you will not believe him nor listen to his teaching, you shall be the laughing stock of the Gentiles.'
10. *Inst. Div.* 4.18.
11. 'The LORD God, the Holy One of Israel, remembered his dead that slept in their graves and he descended to reach to them his salvation.'
12. *AH* 4.22 and *Dem.* 78. He attributes these words to Isaiah in *AH* 3.20.
13. A version known to several other Christian writers, e.g. *Barnabas* 8; Tertullian, *Against the Jews* 10; Venantius, whose late sixth-century hymn, 'Vexilla regis prodeunt' was translated by John Mason Neale as 'The royal banners forward go'. The third verse is: 'Fulfilled is all that David told, In true prophetic song of old, Amidst the nations, God, saith he, Hath reigned and triumphed from the tree.' The reading also occurs in the Verona Psalter, and is implied in the Dura Fresco, see p. 243.
14. *Trypho* 71: 'those passages still acknowledged by you'.
15. *Aristeas* 31 may refer to the existence of earlier defective translations into Greek or to there having been unsatisfactory Hebrew texts already in Egypt. The Greek text is ambiguous; see *OTP* 2 p.14n.
16. E. Schürer, *Geschichte des judischen volkes im Zeitalter Jesu-Christi*, III (4), Leipzig, 1909, p. 424. The revised ET (1986) p. 474 compares it to the AV in the Church of England.
17. *j. Megillah* I.9. This is the familiar form of the quotation, attributed to R. Jeremiah. It appears differently in J. Neusner, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*, vol. 19, Chicago and London, 1987. There is wordplay on 'you are fair', *yaphiyta* and Yaphet, Noah's son who was the ancestor of the Greeks. Greek was the only other language which the rabbis permitted for the Scriptures (*j. Megillah* I.9). Aquila's text was later described as Japhet in the tents of Shem, Gen. 9.27, *b. Megillah* 9b.
18. F. C. Conybeare, *The Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and Timothy and Aquila*, Oxford, 1898, fol. 119ro.
19. M. Simon, *Verus Israel*, Paris, 1948, p. 185: 'Nous sommes en droite ... d'y connaitre non pas les suppressions dues aux juifs mais plutot des interpolations chrétiennes.'
20. R. A. Kraft, 'Christian transmission of Jewish Scriptures', in *Paganisme,*

Judaïsme, Christianisme. Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon, Paris, 1978, pp. 207–26, p. 225.

21. I argued that the Christians were a major factor in the revolt in my book *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh, 2000. The nature and origin of *2 Esdr.* is interesting. Described as Jewish, but the contemporary *2 (Syriac) Baruch* is more in accordance with later Rabbinic Judaism and seems to have been a response to *2 Esdr.* Was the present *2 Esdr.* compiled by Hebrew Christians? There are many similarities to the NT especially to Revelation, and also to *1 Enoch*. See *OTP* 1, pp. 517–23.
22. Thus Syr., Eth., Arab. 1 and Arm.; Latin has 204 books.
23. Five books of the Law, Josh., Jud., 1 and 2 Sam., 1 and 2 Kgs, Isa., Jer., Ezek., the Twelve, Pss, Prov., Job, Song, Ruth, Lam., Eccl., Esth., Dan., Ez-Neh., and 1 and 2 Chron.
24. One would be hard pressed to find spiritual nourishment for the wise in the story of Bel and the Dragon.
25. *Against the Christians* in M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, Jerusalem, 1980, vol. 2, p. 480. The Karaite writer al Qirqisani attributed this claim to the Rabbinic Jews of his day (see below, note 76).
26. This interpretation was also known to Tacitus (*Histories* 5.13) and Suetonius (*Life of Vespasian* 4).
27. See below, pp. 302ff.
28. Preface to *Hebrew Questions*, CCL 72: 'cum illi Ptolomaeo regi Alexandriae mystica quaeque in scripturis sanctis prodere noluerint, et maxime ea, quae Christi adventum pollicebantur, ne viderentur Iudaei alterum deum colere ...'.
29. *j. Megillah* 1.9: Neusner, *op. cit.* (see note 17 above). Also *b. Meg*, 9a.
30. 4QDeut ^{j}.
31. 4QDeut ^{q}.
32. I have not found this in any transcriptions.
33. *m'm yhwh* instead of *m'm yhwh*.
34. Similar contemporary word play on 'abomination' and 'Anointed' is found in Rev. 12, where the mother of the Messiah has fled to the desert and the mother of abominations is in Jerusalem. See my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 21 above), p. 280.
35. The sprinkling is the conclusion of the atonement rite, performed in the second temple by the high priest.
36. And from the LXX.
37. As happened to another difficult reference in the Luke's original account of Jesus' baptism. Unlike Mark and Matthew, the earliest texts of Luke give Psalm 2.7: 'You are my son. Today I have begotten you' as the words heard at the baptism. That Jesus became the son of God at his baptism created obvious difficulties, and the later versions of Luke's Gospel were brought into agreement with the account in Mark and Matthew: 'You are/This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.'
38. Preface to *Hebrew Questions*, CCL 72: 'Sed et evangelistae et dominus quoque ... et Paulus apostolus multa quasi de veteri testamento proferunt quae in nostris codicibus non habentur.'

39. E. Tov, *The Text Critical use of the LXX in Biblical Research* (revised and enlarged second edn), Jerusalem, 1997, p. 210.
40. Ibid., p. 210.
41. E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Assen and Philadelphia, 1992, p. 34.
42. *b. Gitt* 45b. Origen, *Psalms Homily 1* observed that the Jews did not hate the Gentiles who worshipped idols and blasphemed, but they had an insatiable hatred of Christians.
43. Text in J. A. Fitzmyer and D. J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, Rome, 1978, p. 187.
44. Tov, *op. cit.* (note 41 above), p. 35.
45. Ibid., p. 195.
46. The Preface to the New Jerusalem Bible (1985) declares the translators' criteria for choosing a text: 'For the Old Testament, the Masoretic Text is used ... Only when this text represents insuperable difficulties have emendations or versions of other Hebrew manuscripts or ancient versions (notably the LXX and Syriac) been used ...'. E. Ulrich, *op. cit.* (note 3 above), p. 35 commented: 'I randomly selected one of the many Bibles that sit on my shelf, and the Introduction to the first Bible I picked up simply stated clearly and precisely the method that I think is at work, by reflective choice or by unreflective custom, as the principle underlying the work of many Bible translators.'
47. J. P. Siegel, *The Severus Scroll*, SBL, Missoula, 1975.
48. Eusebius, *History of the Church* 6.16.
49. Ibid.
50. N. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews. Studies in Jewish–Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine*, Cambridge, 1976, p. 56, my emphases.
51. *Trypho* 71; also Irenaeus, *AH*, 3.21.1.
52. See pp. 234–8.
53. See Kraft, *op. cit.* (note 20 above), p. 211.
54. English text in G. R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls*, Oxford, 1965, pp. 8–9, citing the original edition by Braun in *Oriens Christianus* (1901) pp. 304–09.
55. Later tradition remembered that when the Torah had been forgotten in Israel, it was three times restored by men from Babylon: Ezra, then R. Hillel, then R. Ḥiyya (*b. Sukkah* 20a).
56. I argued in *The Older Testament. The Survivial of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity* (London, 1987), that the roots of Christianity lay in the royal cult of the first temple, evidence for which had been all but suppressed by those who dominated the second temple.
57. *Numbers R.* XIV 19 emphasizes that the LORD spoke to Moses in Egypt, on Sinai and in the Tent of Meeting, but Aaron was excluded.
58. For a discussion of *deuterosis*, see Simon, *op. cit.* (note 19 above), chapter 3.
59. Conybeare, *op. cit.* (note 18 above), fo. 77a.
60. See G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, Minneapolis, 2001, *ad loc.*
61. 1 Kgs 11.41; 14.29; 15.31. Also 1 Chron. 29.29; 2 Chron. 9.29; 12.15; 33.19. *The Book of the LORD*, Isa. 34.16, must have been a major text, to

judge by the title. It probably underlies the first part of Revelation, see my *Revelation*, *op. cit.* (note 21 above), pp. 65, 67.

62. The *Letter of Barnabas* mentions the type created in Isaac, 'when he was sacrificed on the altar', finding fulfilment in the death of Jesus, and this was then linked to the Day of Atonement sacrifice (*Barn.* 7). Clement of Rome wrote of Isaac's confident faith in what would follow 'that stretched him on the altar with a light heart' (*1 Clem.* 31). These ambiguous references should be set beside Hebrews 11.17–19 and James 2.21, which would have had more point if the recipients of the letters had known that Isaac was sacrificed. 'Abraham ... offered Isaac ...' He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence figuratively speaking, he did receive him back (Heb. 11.17–19). See also S. Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, New York, 1967.
63. This was the case I set out in *The Great Angel. A Study of Israel's Second God*, London, 1992. The Jerusalem Bible's disastrous decision to use Yahweh in the Old Testament and the LORD in the New Testament *destroyed at a stroke the unity of Christian Scripture.* Had the translators had the pre-Masoretic text of Deut. 32, they might have made a different decision.
64. Vaticanus, 4th C, and Alexandrinus, 5th C.
65. I have set out this material in detail in *Great Angel*, *op. cit.* (note 63 above), pp. 190–232.
66. Ibid., p. 17.
67. Ibid., p. 19, citing N. C. Habel, 'Yahweh Maker of Heaven and Earth. A Study in Tradition Criticism', *JBL* 91 (1972).
68. See p. 148.
69. As I argued in my book *The Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 56 above).
70. J. Neusner, *The Incarnation of God. The Character of Divinity in Formative Judaism*, Philadelphia, 1988, p. 435.
71. Text and discussion in A. Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence between Umar II and Leo III', *Harvard Theological Revue* 37 (1944) pp. 717–41.
72. The four forbidden areas of enquiry were what is above, what is beneath, what was beforetime and what will be hereafter (*m. Hagigah* 2.1).
73. As I argued in my book *Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 56 above).
74. A. Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies 2*, Cambridge, 1928, 'Timothy's Apology for Christianity', pp. 55, 57. The midrashim of the thirteen scrolls was probably to counteract such accusations: Moses had made one scroll for the tabernacle and one for each of the twelve tribes, to guarantee authenticity. See H. Lazarus-Yafeh, 'Tahrif and Thirteen Torah Scrolls' in *Jewish Studies in Arabic and Islam* 19 (1995) pp. 81–88.
75. C. Rabin, *Qumran Studies*, Oxford, 1957, pp. 118, 126–28, my emphases.
76. L. Nemoy's translation of Al Qirqisani's account of the Jewish Sects and Christianity in *HUCA* 7 (1930) pp. 317–97, p. 331.
77. Ibid., p. 358.
78. C. Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, Leiden, 1996, chapter 7.
79. See H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds. Mediaeval Islam and Biblical Criticism*, Princeton, 1992, pp. 50–74.

80. Thus G. Garbini, *History and Ideology in Ancient Israel* (ET) London, 1988.
81. Ibid., p. 157, citing J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1883) (ET), New York, 1957, pp. 409–10.
82. Simon, *op. cit.* (note 19 above), p. 435.
83. The subject of my book *Older Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 56 above).
84. Neusner, *op. cit.* (note 70 above), pp. 107, 125, 196.
85. Cf. the frequent claims in the Qur'an that the Jews distorted the meaning of the Book, e.g. 4.46.
86. B. D. Ehrmann, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, Oxford, 1993.
87. B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, London, 1979, p. 99.
88. Kraft, *op. cit.* (note 20 above), p. 226.
89. P. Schäfer, *Hekhalot Studien*, Tübingen, 1988, p. 291.

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SOURCES

Primary Sources

Abbreviations

ACW Ancient Christian Writers

ANCL *Ante Nicene Christian Library*

ANF Ante-Nicene Fathers ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, Edinburgh 1868–72, reprinted Eerdmans Grand Rapids, 1950–52.

ANT The Apocryphal New Testament tr. M. R. James, Oxford, 1924, 1980

DJD Discoveries in the Judaean Desert, various editors, Oxford, 1955–

CCSL *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*

FC *Fathers of the Church*

LCL *Loeb Classical Library*

NPNF *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*

OTP The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha ed. J. H. Charlesworth, London 1983, 1985.

PG *Patrologiae Graecae*

PL *Patrologiae Latinae*

SC *Sources Chrétiennes*

Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

1 Enoch is extant in Ethiopic; Aramaic fragments have been found at Qumran and Greek fragments are also known. It has five sections: The Book of the Watchers, the Parables, the Astronomy Book, the Dreams Visions and the Admonitions. Fragments of all sections except the Parables have been found at Qumran. The earliest Qumran material dates from the third century BCE, but Enochic literature must be much older: The Book of Isaiah presupposes knowledge of something very similar, and Jude, a member of Jesus's family, quoted from this text (Jude 14). Text and tr. M. A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch. A New Edition in the light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Oxford, 1978, also tr. in *OTP* 1 and R. H. Charles *The Book of Enoch*, Oxford, 1912.

2 Enoch, also known as *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch,* is extant in Slavonic but, as with most early religious texts in Slavonic, was probably

translated from the Greek. It is impossible to date, but affinities with ideas known in the first century CE suggest that its sources could be ancient. Tr. in *OTP* 1, also R. H. Charles and W. R. Morfill, *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, Oxford, 1896, and A. Vaillant *Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch: texte slave et traduction francaise*, Paris, (1952) 1976.

The *Book of Jubilees*, also known as *The Little Genesis* and mentioned in the Damascus Document (CD XVI), is a writing with priestly interests possibly dating from early in the second century BCE. The fullest text has survived in Ethiopic but there are fragments in Greek, Syriac and Latin. The original was in Hebrew, and fragments have been found at Qumran and Masada. Tr. in *OTP* 2.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs purports to be the final words of the twelve sons of Jacob, originating perhaps in the early years of the second century BCE but with later Christian additions. The earliest surviving texts are in Greek, but Aramaic fragments of similar material have been found at Qumran. Tr. in *OTP* 1, also R. H. Charles, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* Oxford, 1908, and *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* London, 1908.

The Assumption of Moses, also known as *The Testament of Moses*, purports to be Moses' final words to Joshua, and as such is related to Deuteronomy 31–34. Only one Latin text is known, which seems to be a translation from an earlier Greek test. The original must have been written in Hebrew or Aramaic, probably in the first century CE, as there are thinly veiled references to Herod the Great in Chapter 7. Tr. in *OTP* 1, also E. M. Laperrousaz *Le Testament de Moïse (généralement appelé 'Assomption de Moïse'). Traduction avec introduction et notes*, Paris, 1970.

Apocalypse of Abraham is extant only in Slavonic, but certain names and phrases suggest a Hebrew original. It was probably written at the end of the first century CE as Abraham 'sees' the destruction of the temple. Tr. in *OTP* 1, also G. H. Box and J. I. Landman, *The Apocalypse of Abraham,* London, 1918.

2 Baruch, also known as *Syriac Baruch*, was translated from Greek into Syriac but probably had a Hebrew original. Written as though by Jeremiah's scribe Baruch, after the first destruction of the temple in 597 BCE, it was in fact a reaction to the events of 70 CE. It is a composite work, and evidence for the variety of traditions and hopes for the temple and its rebuilding. Tr. *OTP* 1, also P. Bogaert *Apocalypse de Baruch. Introduction, traduction du Syriaque et commentaire,* Paris, 1969.

The Letter of Aristeas was written in Greek, probably by an Alexandrian Jew, and describes the translation of the Septuagint in the mid-third century BCE. It also gives an account of the temple and the high priest.

Josephus used it in *Antiquities 12*, but it is impossible to date the work. Tr. in *OTP* 2

Life of Adam and Eve is a Latin text which largely corresponds to a Greek text known as *The Apocalypse of Moses*. Both elaborate on the story of Adam and Eve and probably derive from a Hebrew original written in the early second century CE. Tr. in *OTP* 2, also L. S. A.Wells in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament vol 2* ed. R. H. Charles, Oxford, 1913.

Apocalypse of Zephaniah, originally a Jewish text, survives only in part in fourth–fifth century texts from Egypt, preserved in the White Monastery. It was quoted by Clement of Alexandria. Tr. in *OTP* 1

History of the Rechabites, also known as the *Narrative of Zosimus,* is extant in many ancient languages and must have been widely known and used. It is a Christian expansion of an earlier Jewish text. Tr. in *OTP* 2.

Testament of Adam, a Christian text preserving Jewish material, survives in several ancient languages but probably had a Syriac original. The three parts of the work existed by the end of the third century CE. Tr. in *OTP* 1

Testament of Solomon is a Greek Christian text incorporating older Jewish folktale and magic, known to the Gnostics (*On the Origin of the World* CG II.5.2) and to the Christian author of the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*. Tr. in *OTP* 1

Qumran Texts

English translations of most of the non-biblical texts in G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* London, 1997.

1 QIsa[a], *The Complete Isaiah Scroll* and 1QpHab *The Habakkuk Commentary* in M. Burrows, J. C. Trever and W. H. Brownlee, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery I,* New Haven, 1950.
1QSa, *The Messianic Rule*, 1QSb *The Blessings* and 1Q32 in *DJD* I, 1955
1QH, *The Hymns* and 1 QM *The War Scroll* in E. L. Sukenik, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*, Jerusalem, 1954–5.
1QS, *The Community Rule* in M. Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery II/2*, New Haven, 1951.
2Q14, in *DJD* III 1962.
4QGenExod, 4QDeut[j], 4QDeut[q] in DJD XII 1994. For 4QDeut see also P. S. Skehan 'A Fragment of the Song of Moses from Qumran', *BASOR* 136 (1954), pp. 12–15.
4Q En Giants, 4Q En[c] and 4QEn[g] in J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch. The Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, Oxford, 1976; also in *DJD* VII 1982.
4Q 156, in *DJD* VI 1977.

4Q 265-273, 5Q12, 6Q15 *The Damascus Document* in *DJD* XVIII 1996. The original Cairo Genizah text in S. Schechter, *Fragments of a Zadokite Work,* Cambridge, 1910.
4Q400-407, 11 Q 17, *The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* in *DJD* XI 1998. Also in *Angelic Liturgy: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* ed. J. H. Charlesworth and C. A. Newsom, Tübingen and Louisville, 1999.
11Q 13 *Melchizedek* in *DJD* XXIII 1998.
11QT *The Temple Scroll* in *DJD* XXIII 1998. Also J. Maier, *The Temple Scroll,* Sheffield, 1985.

Other Jewish Writers

Philo of Alexandria (about 20 BCE–50 CE) was from a wealthy and influential family; he himself headed the community's embassy to the emperor Caligula in 40 CE. Jerome said that Philo was of a priestly family (*On Illustrious Men* XI) and he was probably correct. He is aware of the older priestly traditions of Israel, and much in his writings that is identified as Platonism, for example the heavenly archetypes, the second mediator God, is more likely to have originated in the priestly traditions of the first temple. Text and tr. F. H. Colson, G. H.Whittaker and R. Marcus in *LCL*, 12 vols, 1929–1963.

Flavius *Josephus* was the Roman name of Joseph ben Matthias (about 35–100 CE), a man of royal and high priestly blood. At the start of the revolt against Rome he commanded troops in Galilee, but changed sides and served as a translator for the Romans. He later lived in Rome under the patronage of the emperor, and wrote *The Jewish War,* originally in Aramaic, but only the Greek version survives. Although an eyewitness, he was hardly an impartial observer. Text and tr. H. St. J. Thackeray in *LCL*, 3 vols, (1927) 1997. He later wrote *The Antiquities of the Jews,* the first half based on the Hebrew Scriptures and the remainder a valuable source for the later period. Text and tr. Marcus, *LCL*, 9 vols, 1963–1969. Josephus also wrote an autobiography *Life,* and an apologetic piece *Against Apion* which describes the antiquity of Israel and the ideals of the Law. Text and tr. H. St J. Thackeray in *LCL*, 1956–65. An older and interesting translation of the works of Josephus was made by William Whiston, London, 1844.

Rabbinic texts

The *Mishnah,* a name perhaps derived either from the Hebrew word for repeat or learn, or from the fact that it was 'second' in relation to the Law, is the collection of religious law from the end of the second temple period attributed to R. Judah ha Nasi. The Mishnah comprises six sections, each subdivided into Tractates. Tr. H. Danby, *The Mishnah*, Oxford, (1933) 1989.

Gemara, the 'completion' of the study, was added to each section of the Mishnah and thus the Talmud 'study' was formed. *The Palestinian Talmud*, the Yerushalmi, is the commentary on the Mishnah developed in Palestine, and contains additional material only loosely connected to the Mishnah. Compiled perhaps in the early fifth century, it does not cover the whole of the Mishnah. Tr. as *The Talmud of the Land of Israel,* ed. J. Neusner, Chicago and London, 1989–. The Babylonian Talmud, a longer work including other material taught in the rabbinic schools, was probably compiled in the early sixth century CE. Tr. I Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud*, 35 vols, Soncino, London, 1935–1952, reprinted 1961. *The Fathers According to R. Nathan*, tr. A. Cohen, can be found in the *Minor Tractates of the Talmud* vol 1, London, 1965.

Tosefta (pl. tosafot) means addition, a supplement to the Mishnah. Tr. in *Tosefta,* ed. J. Neusner, New York, 1979–.

Scroll of Fasting. Tr. in J. Fitzmyer and D. J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, Rome, 1978.

Midrashim

Genesis Rabbah, an exegetical midrash compiled in Palestine perhaps in the early fifth century CE, became part of the medieval Midrash Rabbah, the Great Midrash. Tr. H. Freedman, 2 vols, London, (1939) 1961.

Exodus Rabbah is in two parts: the first is an exegetical midrash on Exodus 1-10 and the second a homiletic midrash on Exodus 12-40. Exodus 11 is not covered. Dating is uncertain, but it was known in its present combined form in the twelfth century. Tr. S. M. Lehrman, London, (1939) 1961.

Leviticus Rabbah is a homiletic midrash and was probably compiled in the fifth century CE from the traditions of scholars in Palestine. Tr. J. Israelstam and J. J. Slotki, London, (1939) 1961.

Numbers Rabbah is a composite work: the first and longer part covers Num. 1-7, the second part deals more briefly with Num. 8-36. The two were combined by the thirteenth century. Tr. J. J. Slotki, London, (1939) 1961.

Song of Songs Rabbah is an exegetical midrash. Some date the compilation to the mid-sixth century, but it seems to contain much older material which reflects early Jewish Christian controversies. Tr. M. Simon, London, (1939) 1961.

Midrash Tanhuma, sometimes *Tanhuma Yelamedenu*, is a collection of homiletic midrashim on the Pentateuch which exists in several versions. Much of the material is of Palestinian origin and is attributed

to the late fourth century R. Tanhuma, although the present collections are from a later date. Tr. S. A. Berman, New York, 1996.

Memar Marqah is a Samaritan haggadic midrash about Moses and the Exodus, based on selected verses from the Pentateuch and compiled in the fourth century CE. Tr. J. MacDonald, *Memar Marqah,* 2 vols, Berlin, 1963.

Targums

The *Targums* are Aramaic translations (and expansions) of biblical texts, representing Babylonian (Onqelos) and Palestinian traditions. It is not possible to date them, because they are the written deposit of an oral tradition and contain material from many periods. There are English translations in the Aramaic Bible series published by T&T Clark, Edinburgh.

T. Neofiti *Genesis* by M. McNamara 1992
T. Pseudo Jonathan *Genesis* by M. Maher 1992
T. Neofiti *1 Exodus* tr. M. McNamara with notes by C. T. R. Hayward and T. Pseudo Jonathan *Exodus* tr. and notes by M. Maher in 1994.
T. Neofiti *1 Leviticus* tr. M. McNamara with notes by C. T. R. Hayward 1994
T. Onqelos *Numbers* tr. and notes B. Grossfeld 1988
The Isaiah Targum by B. Chilton, 1987.

Merkavah Texts

3 Enoch, also known as *The Hebrew Enoch,* (but its original title was probably *Sepher Hekhalot*), contains material attributed to the early second century CE R. Ishmael. It is the deposit of a school of tradition with Palestinian roots and probably reached its present form in the fifth/sixth century CE. Tr. P.Alexander in *OTP* 1.

Hekhalot Rabbati (The Greater Palaces) and *Hekhalot Zutarti* (The Lesser Palaces) are similar collections of texts, which Schäfer holds to be earlier than *3 Enoch.* There is also *Merkavah Rabbah* (The Great Chariot) and *Ma'aseh Merkavah,* (The Work of the Chariot), the original texts of which can be found in P. Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot Literatur,* Mohr Tübingen, 1981. There is a translation of Ma'aseh Merkavah in the appendix to G. G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition,* New York, 1960, and there are extracts in P. Schäfer *The Hidden and Manifest God. Some Major Themes on Early Jewish Mysticism,* New York, 1992. I do not know of any complete English translation.

Sepher Yetsira (The Book of Creation) is an esoteric text composed of two originally separate parts: the first about the ten sefirot, the second

about the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet which uphold the creation. It probably came from Palestine and dates from the third–sixth century. Tr. in D. Blumenthal, *Understanding Jewish Mysticism. A Source Reader,* New York, 1978.

The *Zohar* claims to be R. Simeon ben Yohai's commentary on the Pentateuch, but the earliest evidence for its existence is from thirteenth century Spain. *Zohar* Tr. H. Sperling and M. Simon, 5 vols, London and Bournemouth, 1949.

Aramaic Papyri from Elephantine in A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century BC*, Oxford, 1923.

Early Christian Texts.

Ambrose was Bishop of Milan 339–397 CE. *On the Mysteries*, text PL 16.405–; tr. T. Thompson, London, 1919.

R. T. Meyer, *Life of St Anthony*, text *PG* 26.835; tr. *ACW* 10, Westminster, Maryland, 1950.

Epistle of the Apostles may have been written in Asia Minor in the mid-second century, but the earliest MS is fourth–fifth century. In *ANT.*

The Apostolic Constitutions is a collection of materials on Church order in 8 books, compiled perhaps at the end of the fourth century. It is based on the *Didache*, the *Didascalia* and the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus. Text *PG* 1.509–, tr. W. Whiston, revised J. Donaldson, *ANCL* 17, Edinburgh, 1873.

Athanasius was Bishop of Alexandria 328-373 CE. *Sermon to the Baptised (fragments),* text *PG* 26.1325.

The *Letter of Barnabas*, written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, was traditionally attributed to Barnabas the Levite from Cyprus, who was Paul's companion on his first missionary journey (Acts 4.36; 13.2). The Greek text was rediscovered in 1859 in the Sinai Codex. Text *PG* 2.727–, tr. M. Staniforth in *Early Christian Writings. The Apostolic Fathers,* Harmondsworth, 1968.

Basil of Caesarea (330–379 CE), known as 'the great', became Bishop of Caesarea in Cappodocia in 370 CE. *On the Holy Spirit*, text *PG* 32.67. *Letters,* text *PG* 32.219–, tr. R. T. Defeffari, *LCL*, 4 vols, (1926) 1950.

Clement was Bishop of Rome at the end of the first century. His letter to Corinth is known as 1 Clement. Text *PG* 1.329–; tr. M.Staniforth in *Early Christian Writings. The Apostolic Fathers,* Harmondsworth, 1968. Attributed to Clement are the *Clementine Recognitions* and the very similar *Clementine Homilies*, which describe how Clement was converted to Christianity and travelled with St. Peter. Opinions vary

as to the date and value of these works. Text of *Recognitions* in *PG* 1.1157, *Homilies* in *PG* 2.1–; tr. of both T. Smith, ANF 8.

Clement of Alexandria (died c214 CE). According to Eusebius (*History* 6.6,13) he settled in Alexandria as a pupil of Pantaenus and eventually succeeded him as head of the Catechetical School there, where he taught Origen. He fled to Asia Minor during the persecution of Severus in 202 CE. *Miscellanies*, text *PG* 8.685–, tr. W. Wilson in ANF 2. *The Instructor*, text *PG* 8.247–, tr. S. P. Wood, *Christ the Educator*, *FC* 23, Washington, 1954. *Excerpts from Theodotus*, text and tr. R. P.Casey, *Studies and Documents 1*, London, 1934. *Hypotyposes* only extant in quotation in Eusebius' *History*

Cosmas was a sixth-century Egyptian Christian who had travelled as far as India, hence 'Indicopleustes'. *A Christian Topography*, text *PG* 88.51– , tr. J. W., McCrindle, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1897.

Cyril was Bishop of Alexandria 412–444 CE. *Letters*, text *PG* 77.9–, tr. J. I. McEnerney, FC 76, 77, Washington, 1985. *Commentary on John*, text *PG* 73.9–, tr. 'Members of the English Church', Oxford and London, vol.1 1874, vol.2, 1885.

Cyril was bishop of Jerusalem 349–387 CE. *Catecheses*, text *PG* 33.331, tr. and ed. F. L.Cross, SPCK London, 1966. Also *Catecheses 1–12*, FC 2, tr. L. P.McCauley and A. A.Stephenson, Washington, 1968. *Catecheses 13–18 and Mystagogical Lectures* [i.e *Catecheses* 19–23] *FC* 64 tr. L. P McCauley and A. A.Stephenson, Washington, 1970.

The Didache or 'The Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations' is a manual of church life, possibly from the first century. It was rewritten as Book 7 of the Apostolic Constitutions, and parts survive in Coptic, Ethiopic, and Latin. There is a complete Greek text dated 1056. Eusebius (*History* 3.25) said that it was orthodox teaching but not part of the canon. Tr. M. Staniforth in *Early Christian Writings. The Apostolic Fathers,* Harmondsworth, 1968.

The Didascalia is an early third-century Greek text from Syria, which survives in Syriac and parts in Latin. There are Ethiopic and Arabic versions, and it became the basis for Books 1–6 of the Apostolic Constitutions. Tr. R. H. Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum. The Syriac Version Translated and Accompanied by the Verona Latin Fragments,* Oxford, 1929.

Epistle to Diognetus is an anonymous Greek text, perhaps from the second century. Text *PG* 2.1167–, tr. M. Staniforth in *Early Christian Writings. The Apostolic Fathers*, Harmondsworth, 1968.

Dionysius the Areopagite, known as Pseudo-Dionysius, lived around 500 CE in Syria, but was identified with the Athenian Dionysius of Acts

17.34. *On the Celestial Hierarchy*, PG 3.119–, *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, *PG* 3.369–, *On the Divine Names*, *PG* 3.586, all tr. C. Luibheid in *Pseudo-Dionysius. The Complete Works,* New York, 1987.

Egeria's Travels is an early fifth-century travel diary rediscovered in 1884, describing the pilgrimage sites, the great churches of the Holy Land, and the celebration of Holy Week. Text *CCSL* 175, tr. and ed. J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels,* 3rd edn., Warminster, 1999.

Gospel of the Egyptians survives only as quotations in other texts. In *ANT.*

Epiphanius became Bishop of Salamis on Cyprus in 367 CE. He wrote the *Panarion* (The Medicine Chest), against the 80 heresies which he believed were contrary to Nicene orthodoxy. It contains quotations from works which have not survived elsewhere. Text *PG* 41.173–, tr. F. Williams, *Panarion Book 1 (1–46),* Leiden, 1987.

Eusebius (c. 260–340 CE), Bishop of Caesarea, preserved in his writings quotations from many texts which no longer survive. The first draft of his *Church History* was written before he became a bishop (c313 CE), but he revised the work in the light of later developments. *The Preparation of the Gospel* and its companion *The Proof of the Gospel* were written later, in response to the philosopher Porphyry's attack on Christianity. *Church History* text *PG* 20.9–, also text and tr. K. Lake and J. E. L Oulton, *The Ecclesiastical History*, in *LCL*, 2 vols, 1926, 1932, also tr. G. A. Williamson, *The History of the Church*, Harmondsworth, 1965. *The Preparation of the Gospel*, text *PG* 21.21–, tr. E. H. Gifford, Oxford, 1903. *The Proof of the Gospel*, text *PG* 22.9–, tr.W. G. Ferrar, London, 1920. *Life of Constantine*, text *PG* 20.910–, tr. A. Cameron and S. G. Hall, Oxford, 1999. *In Praise of Constantine*, text *PG* 20.1315. *On the Psalms* Text *PG* 23.65–.

Germanus was Patriarch of Constantinople 715–703 CE. *On the Divine Liturgy*, text *PG* 98.384–, tr. P. Meyendorff, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1999.

Gregory the Great was Bishop of Rome 590–604 CE. *The Dialogues* describe the lives and miracles of holy men and women in Italy. Text *PL* 7.149, tr. J. Zimmerman, *FC* 39, Washington, 1959.

Gregory of Nazianzus, 'the theologian', was Bishop of Constantinople 379–381 CE. *Letters*, text *PG* 37.21–.

Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa (372–395 CE) was the younger brother of Basil the Great. *De anima et resurrectione*, text *PG* 46.11–. *In diem natale*, text *PG* 46.1128–. *On the Song of songs*, text *PG* 44.755.

Gospel of the Hebrews survives only as quotations in other texts. Tr. in *ANT*.

Hermas was a visionary who lived in Rome and recorded his visions from c90 CE. *The Shepherd* (his guiding angel was dressed as a shepherd) was written in Greek and included in the Sinai Codex. Text *PG* 2.892–; text and tr. K. Lake in *The Apostolic Fathers vol 2*, *LCL*, (1913) 1948.

Hippolytus (c160–235 CE), was a schismatic bishop at Rome who was exiled to Sardinia. He was the last major scholar in the Roman church to write in Greek. *On Daniel*, text *PG* 10.633–, *Refutation*, text PG 10.803–, both tr. S. D. F. Salmond, *ANCL* 6 Edinburgh, 1868. *Refutation* tr. F. Legge, London, 1927.

Ignatius became the second Bishop of Antioch (Eusebius *History* 3.36) about 69 CE and died a martyr in Rome c107 CE. En route to Rome he wrote seven letters to churches in Asia Minor, which were collected by Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (Ep. Poylcarp to the Philippians 13.2). Text *PG* 5.644–, tr. M. Staniforth in *Early Christian Writings. The Apostolic Fathers*, Harmondsworth, 1968.

Irenaeus was born in Smyrna, where he knew Polycarp and learned from him about the teachings of John. He studied in Rome and then went to Lyons as bishop. His work *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* was lost for centuries, but an Armenian version was discovered in 1904. J. A. Robinson, *St Irenaeus. The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, London, 1920. His major five volume work, *Against Heresies*, is a refutation of gnosticism in all its aspects. It is extant in a Latin translation, with fragments of the original Greek surviving as quotations in other works. Text *PG* 7.433–, tr. *ANF* vol 1.

The Ascension of Isaiah is a composite work comprising the Martyrdom of Isaiah (cc 1–5) and The Vision of Isaiah (cc 6–11), but these sections are themselves composite. Although probably written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek and other languages, the entire text survives only in Ethiopic. A pre-Christian Hebrew text about the martyrdom of Isaiah has been expanded by Christian visionary material, some of which clearly describes the church in the first century. The Christian additions show a remarkable similarity to the teaching attributed to James in Eusebius *History* 2.23 and *Clementine Recognitions* 1.66–70. Epiphanius Panarion I.36.16 attributes to James an otherwise unknown book used by the Ebionites, *The Ascents of James*, which has probably survived in these portions of *The Ascension of Isaiah*. In *OTP* 2.

Jacob was Bishop of Serug, a Syriac-speaking region of the Roman province of Osrhoene. A major figure, he wrote many homilies and letters, and died in 521 CE. Text P. Bedjan, *Homilae Selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis*, vols I-V, Paris and Leipzig, 1905–10. Parts of III.648-62 tr.

H. Connolly in *The Downside Review* NS 8, 1908, pp. 278–87. Parts of IV.543-610 tr. in A. Golitzin 'The Image and Glory of God in Jacob's Homily On the Chariot that Ezekiel saw', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, forthcoming.

Infancy Gospel of James, an early Christian text telling of the birth and childhood of Mary, was known to Origen. In *ANT.*

Jerome (c.347–420 CE) was head of a monastery near Bethlehem for over 30 years, and was appointed by Pope Damasus to prepare a revised Latin text of the Bible, which eventually became the Vulgate. The prefaces to the biblical texts can be found in the Vulgate itself. Between 393 and 406 CE he wrote a series of commentaries on biblical texts. *Letters*, text PL 22.325–, tr. C. C. Mierow, ACW 33, Westminster, Maryland, 1963. *Select Letters*, tr. F. A.Wright, *LCL* (1933) 1963. *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, text *PL* 23.983–, text and tr. C. T. R. Hayward, *Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, Oxford, 1995. *On Psalms*, text *PL* 26.849; tr. M. L. Ewald, *FC* 48, Washington, 1964. *On Isaiah*, text *PL* 24.17–. *On Ezekiel*, text *PL* 25.15–. *On Zephaniah*, text *PL* 25.1337–. *On Matthew*, text *PL* 26.15 French tr. E. Bonnard, *Commentaire sur S. Matthieu*, SC 259, Paris 1979. *On Illustrious Men*, text *PL* 23.631–, tr. T. P. Halton, FC 100, Washington, 1999.

John Chrysostom (347–407 CE) was born in Antioch, and was a great preacher and interpreter of the Bible. He became Bishop of Constantinople in 398, but ecclesiastical and court politics led to his being banished, and he died in exile. *On Priesthood*, text *PG* 48.623–, tr. G. Neville, London SPCK, 1977, and tr. W. R. W. Stephens in *NPNF* vol ix, Grand Rapids, (1889) 1975. *Homily on Isaiah 6*, text *PG* 56.97–. *Homilies On 1 Timothy*, text *PG* 62.501, tr. P. Schaff in *NPNF* 13, Grand Rapids, (1899) 1969. *On Psalms*, text *PG* 55.

Justin was born of a Roman family who lived near Shechem in Samaria. He lived for a while in Ephesus where his dialogue with the Jew Trypho is set, some time after the end of the Bar Kochbar revolt in 135 CE. He moved to Rome where he wrote his First Apology, addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius, and his Second Apology, addressed to the Roman senate. His defence of Christianity eventually led to his execution c. 165 CE. *Dialogue with Trypho*, text *PG* 6.471–, *Apology*, text *PG* 6.327–, and *To the Greeks*, text *PG* 6.227–, all tr. *ANF* 1.

Lactantius, who died about 325 CE, came from North Africa. He was a teacher of Latin rhetoric and tutor to the Emperor Constantine's son. *The Divine Institutes* 1–8, text *PL* 6.113–, tr. M. F. McDonald, FC 49, Washington, 1964.

Leo the Great was Bishop of Rome (440–461 CE). His letter on the one person and two natures of Christ, known as the *Tome*, was accepted at

the Council of Chalcedon in 451. *Sermons*, text *PL* 54.151, tr. J. P. Freeland and A. J. Conway, *FC* 93, Washington, 1996.

Maximus the Confessor (580–662 CE) was a Greek monk and mystic who was exiled and tortured for his faith. *The Church's Mystagogy*, text PG 91.658–, tr. G. C. Berthold in *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings*, New York, 1985.

Narsai, a Nestorian, became head of the school of Edessa in 451 CE. Ecclesiastical politics forced him to flee to Nisibis, where he taught until his death in c. 503 CE. *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, tr. R. H. Connolly, Cambridge, 1909.

Origen was the greatest biblical scholar in the early Church, both as text critic and as exegete. Forced by ecclesiastical politics to flee from his home city of Alexandria, he settled in Palestine, where he died some time after June 251, as the result of torture during the Decian persecution.

First Principles, text *PG* 11.115–, tr. G. W. Butterworth, London, 1936. *Against Celsus*, text *PG* 11.637–, tr. H. Chadwick, Cambridge, 1953. *On Prayer* Text *PG* 11.416–, tr. E. G. Jay, London, 1954. *Homilies on Exodus* Text *PG* 12.297–, tr. R. E. Heine, FC 7, Washington, 1982. *Homilies on Leviticus 1–16*, text *PG* 12.405–, tr. G. W. Barkley, FC 83, Washington, 1990. *On Numbers*, text *PG* 12.583–, *On Psalms*, text *PG* 12.1053–; *Homilies on Jeremiah*, text *PG* 13.256–, tr. J. C. Smith, FC 97, Washington, 1998. *Homelies on Ezekiel*, text *PG* 13.663–, French tr. M. Borret, *Homelies sur Ezechiel*, *SC* 352, Paris, 1989. *Commentary on Matthew*, text *PG* 13.829–, Books 10–14 and fragments of 1–2 tr. J. Patrick, tr. *ANCL* (additional volume), Edinburgh, 1897, reprinted Grand Rapids, 1974. *Homelies on Luke*, text *PG* 13.1801–, tr. J. T. Lienhard, FC 94, Washington, 1996. *On John 1–10*, text *PG* 14.21, tr. R. E. Heine, FC 80, 1989. *On John 13–32*, tr. R. E. Heine *FC* 89, 1993. *Letter to Julius Africanus*, text *PG* 11.48, French tr. in N. de Lange, *La Lettre à Africanus*, *SC* 302, Paris, 1983.

Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna, a disciple of John the Apostle and a formative influence on the young Irenaeus. He was martyred in c.156 CE. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, text *PG* 5.1029–, tr. M. Staniforth in *Early Christian Writings. The Apostolic Fathers*, Harmondsworth, 1968.

The Odes of Solomon are a collection of hymns on baptismal themes, written originally in Syriac (or perhaps Hebrew) at the end of the first century CE. There are similarities to the Qumran Hymns and to the Fourth Gospel. Text and tr. in J. H. Charlesworth *The Odes of Solomon*, Oxford, 1973, translation only in *OTP* 2.

Symeon became Archbishop of Thessaloniki in 1416. *Treatise on Prayer*, text *PG* 155.536–, tr. H. N. L. Simmons, Brookline MA, 1984.

Tatian (second century) came from Syria but travelled to Rome, where he met Justin Martyr. He is best known for his harmony of the four Gospels, the Diatessaron. *To the Greeks*, text *PG* 6.803–, ed. and tr. M. Whittaker, *Oratio ad Graecos and Fragments,* Oxford, 1982.

Tertullian (late second century) from North Africa but moved to Rome, and was the first major Christian writer to use Latin. *De Jejuniis*, text *PL* 2.953–. *Against the Jews*, text *PL* 2.597–.

Theodoret came from Antioch and was Bishop of Cyrrhus 423-449 CE. *On the Psalms*, text *PG* 80.857–.

The Acts of Thomas, originally written in Syriac early in the third century, were combined by the Manichaeans with the Acts of John, the Acts of Paul, the Acts of Peter and the Acts of Andrew as a substitute for the canonical Acts of the Apostles. Tr. in *ANT*.

Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila, text and tr. in F. C. Conybeare, *Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and Timothy and Aquila*, Oxford, 1898.

Gnostic Texts

Twelve papyrus books of Gnostic texts, along with fragments of a thirteenth, were found at Nag Hammadi in Egypt in 1945, and are known as the Coptic Gnostic Library. Most of the Gnostic texts cited in this book are from this collection. There is still much to be learned about the so-called Gnostics, as well as much to be unlearned. They regarded themselves as the guardians of true Christianity, and so the label 'heretic' should not be applied with too much confidence. The Gospel of Thomas shows Jesus in his original setting as a temple mystic, for example, and the pair of texts known as the Letter of Eugnostos and the Wisdom of Jesus Christ show how an older text, rooted in the priestly Wisdom tradition, was 'adopted' as the teaching of Jesus. The pre-supposition which makes Plato a major influence on Philo also masks the Hebrew roots of gnosticism (see my *The Great Angel*, 1992). English translations in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English,* ed. J. M. Robinson, Leiden, 1996. Critical editions of the original texts in *The Coptic Gnostic Library,* Leiden. Of the texts cited in this book:

Nag Hammadi Codex I, 2 vols, ed. H. W. Attridge, 1985, contains the Apocryphon of James and The Tripartite Tractate.

Nag Hammadi Codex II.2-7, 2 vols, ed. B. Layton, 1989, contains The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Philip, The Hypostasis of the Archons, On the Origin of the World.

Nag Hammadi Codices III.3-4 and V.1, ed. D. M. Parrott, 1991, contains the Letter of Eugnostos and The Sophia of Jesus Christ.

Nag Hammadi Codex III.5, ed. S. Emmel, 1984, contains The Dialogue of the Saviour.

Nag Hammadi Codex VII, ed. B. Pearson, 1996, contains the Teaching of Silvanus and the Three Steles of Seth.

Nag Hammadi Codex VIII, ed. J. H. Sieber, 1991, contains the Letter of Peter to Philip.

Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XII, ed. C. W. Hedrick, 1990, contains Allogenes and First Thought.

Pistis Sophia, ed. C Schmidt, tr. V. MacDermot, Nag Hammad Studies ix, Leiden, 1978.

The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex, tr. C. Schmidt with notes by V. MacDermot, Nag Hammadi Studies xiii, Leiden, 1978.

Ugaritic Texts

Texts from the late Bronze Age (c. 1550–1200 BCE) were recovered as the result of a chance find in 1928 near Ras Shamra on the coast of Syria. The ancient city of Ugarit yielded clay tablets in seven languages, one of them the hitherto unknown Ugaritic, akin to early Hebrew. The religious texts illuminate aspects of the Hebrew Scriptures. Fifty religious texts and commentary in N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit. The Words of Ilimilku and his Colleagues,* Sheffield, 1998.

Other Classical texts

Aristotle 384–322 BCE, was the boyhood tutor to Alexander the Great, and the founder of the Athenian philosophers known as the Peripatetics. *On the Heavens*, tr. W. K. C. Guthrie, *LCL*, (1939) 1960. *Metaphysics 1–9*, tr H. Tredennick, *LCL*, (1933) 1968. *Metaphysics 10–14*, tr. H. Tredennick, *LCL*, (1935) 1969. *Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. H. Rackham, *LCL*, (1926) 1968.

Diogenes Laertius wrote early in the third century. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, tr. R. D. Hicks, 2 vols, *LCL*, 1925 (1966).

Hecataeus of Abdera, who lived in the fourth century BCE, is quoted in Diodorus Siculus 40.3.5–6. Text and tr. F. R. Walton in *LCL*, 12 vols, 1967.

Herodotus of Halicarnassus (c. 485–425 BCE) was the first Greek historiographer, and his *Histories* are the earliest great prose work in European literature. Tr. A. de Selincourt, *Herodotus. The Histories,* Harmondsworth, (1954) 1971. Greek text and tr. A. D. Godley, 4 vols LCL, 1969.

Iamblichus, who died 33 CE, was a Neoplatonist philosopher from Syria who defended the older religion and philosophy against Christianity. *Life of Pythagoras*, tr. T. Taylor, London, (1818) 1965.

Juvenal, who died 130 CE, wrote Latin satirical poetry. *Satires*, *LCL*, G. G. Ramsay, tr. (1918) 1990.

Pausanias lived in the second century CE. *Description of Greece*, 5 vols, tr. W. H. S. Jones *et al.*, *LCL*, (1918) 1969.

Plato, who died 348 BCE, was the most famous pupil of Socrates, and founded the Academy at Athens which survived for over 800 years. *Critias* and *Timaeus*, texts and tr. R. G. Bury in *Plato* Vol. IX, *LCL*, Cambridge MA and London, (1929) 1969.

Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE) died in the eruption of Vesuvius. His one surviving work is *The Natural History* in 37 books. Text and tr. H. Rackham, *LCL* 10 vols, (1938) 1997.

Porphyry, who died about 305 CE, was a Neoplatonic philosopher and a pupil of Plotinus. Fragments survive of his lost work *Against the Christians*, found in Eusebius' *Preparation of the Gospel* and *Demonstration of the Gospel*. Some fragments are also in M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1980. *On Abstinence*, tr. T. Taylor, London, 1965.

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